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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
COLLEY CIBBER

By the same author

THE GAY KING CHARLES II
His Court and Times

SOME OLD ENGLISH
WORTHILS

etc



- H. Cibber

*Colley Cibber as Lord Foppington in Vanbrugh's
"The Relapse"*

Portrait in the Garrick Club, painted by G. Grisoni,
engraved by J. Simon

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COLLEY CIBBER

BY

F DOROTHY SENIOR

"Supposing Dulness to be actually criminal, I will leave you to your own Conscience to declare, whether you really think I am generally so guilty of it as to deserve the name of the Dull Fellow you make of me" A Letter from Mr Cibber to Mr Pope, 1742

WITH
ILLUSTRATIONS

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To my friends

THE HON. MR. JUSTICE LORT-WILLIAMS, K C.

and his dear wife

MARGERY

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PROLOGUE

COLLEY CIBBER, actor, dramatist, fop, Poet-Laureate, wrote an *Apology* for his life. Perhaps it has been unwise of me to be the first, after him, to attempt to write a Life of Colley Cibber, and, having done so, an apology is due from me to my readers.

Fifteen years ago the temptation to write of Cibber assailed me one day as I stood before Roubillac's coloured bust of the comedian in the National Gallery. Since then many things have intervened, but the memory of a shrewd, humorous face with sanguine complexion, small hazel eyes and a thin-lipped mouth has persisted until now. When I first saw the bust, it was so placed that the little eyes were fixed on an adjacent portrait of Lady Churchill (the object of Colley's calf-love). Upon the well-cut mouth lingered a smile part pensive, part sentimental, as though Colley in wax contemplated in whimsical wonder his old innamorata, the while he went back in memory to Colley as he was in the flesh, when he acted Justice Shallow, and declaimed: "The mad days that I have spent! and to see how many of my old acquaintance are dead!" so admirably that he took the town by storm¹

Roubillac's bust gives one a livelier idea of the man it represents than mere words can convey. It must have been a speaking likeness. It spoke to me of a cheery soul who was by no means the dull fellow Alexander Pope pilloried for all time in his *Dunciad*;

¹ "I question if any actor was ever superior in the conception or expression of such solemn insignificancy"—Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*

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an easy-going man of the world whose unfailing *gaieté du cœur* sustained him through years of hope deferred, followed by years of persecution and ill-natured criticism. For twenty years Cibber was the butt of the scurrilous press of his day, and had arrayed against him such men as Pope, Swift, Johnson, Warburton, Fielding, Dennis; not to mention the pack of obscure pamphleteers who attacked him under the shield of their mean anonymity. Vain, insouciant, impenetrable, Cibber laughed at them all and seldom lost his temper or his sense of humour. Like Peter Pan, he never grew up though he grew very old. It seems almost incredible that he who as a child watched the Metry Monarch feeding his ducks in St. James's Park, should have lived to hear of Surajah Dowlah's atrocities, and of the horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Yet it was so.

Edmund Bellchambers, who in 1822 edited Cibber's *Apology for his Own Life*,¹ seems to have set about his task in a thoroughly jaundiced mood, prejudiced against the actor-Laureate from the start, ready to believe all that his enemies wrote about him, disinclined to hear a word in his defence—of all moods the one least favourable to biographical truth. There is only one mood more fatal, and that is the one which insists on seeing nothing but good in one's subject. Since Bellchambers (or Burn) admitted himself to be "neither able nor willing" to authenticate what he evidently believed to be the truth, namely that Cibber did become "in the zenith of his notoriety a drunkard, a fornicator, and an atheist," why did he essay to edit the man's life? Mine had been an easier task had I followed Bellchambers' (or Burn's) method and accepted unquestioningly all that Pope in his ungovernable rage and Warburton in his sycophantic prurience wrote. But Pope in a temper

¹ John Burn claimed to have been the annotator, but as Bellchambers set his name to the edition he made himself responsible for its misstatements.

Prologue

was notoriously unjust, and Warburton encouraged him to pile Ossa upon Pelion. It is obvious that Bellchambers, hypnotised by Pope's greatness, greedily assimilated all that he and his army of toadies wrote about Cibber, without once stopping to consider that in the wordy battles waged on paper in a coarse age, it was permissible to dip the pen in garbage; and the fouler the missiles cast, the better; a fact later chrystalised by Beaumarchais in his pregnant phrase: *Calomniez, calomniez; il en reste toujours quelque chose*. "It is a melancholy consideration," wrote Bolingbroke to the Earl of Strafford on July 23rd, 1712, "that the laws of our country are too weak to punish effectually those factitious scribblers who presume to blacken the brightest characters, and to give even scurrilous language to those who are in the first degrees of honour."

Towards the end of his Preface Bellchambers at last desists from his attitude of Virtue reproving Vice in a morality play, when he admits it was "a solemn mockery of justice on the part of Pope to gratify his rancour by holding up Cibber as a dunce"; and even hazards the opinion that in the comedian's *Apology* may be found a fairer estimate of his character than in the filthy pages of the pamphleteers. "He was," confesses Bellchambers,—and the confession is not without humour, though unintentional—"no hypocrite in his turpitude."

Bellchambers chose Fielding's novels and the scurrilous pamphlets written by the comedian's enemies as the sources whence he drew what he was pleased to consider the truth about Cibber. Horace Walpole, who knew Cibber well, he ignored; Victor he contradicted; yet the author of the *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin* was in familiar correspondence with Cibber to the end of his life. Surely the testimony of these men should not utterly go for naught, whilst that of such a professional libeller as Dennis be accepted?

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Vain Cibber was and shallow, extraordinarily narrow-minded and unsympathetic for a man who lived so long and saw and suffered so much, but that was the worst to be said of him. Perhaps he was, as Johnson said he was, "a poor creature"—but no worse than, if as bad as, his contemporaries. At least he did not go to bed drunk every night, nor was it possible for him to spend his laborious days in a sodden, brutish state.

Cibber was a Londoner of Londoners, in the roaring days of Congreve and Vanbrugh, of Richardson, and unlucky, lovable Dickie Steele. Like them he gambled and had his fling now and then. But he was not a profligate. • The dupe of his passions, he was never a slave to them, and among all the unkind things written of Cibber I have been unable to find any foundation for the suggestion that he was a libertine at fourscore, beyond his senile and entirely harmless passion for Peg Woffington. Though he neglected his wife, he remained faithful to her. To Pope's wrath (not in this instance unjustifiable) at an ill-judged revelation by Colley of an unsavoury episode in the poet's past, must be attributed his spiteful line in the *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, "and has not Colley still his Lord and Wh—e?"

To which Colley in a public letter to Pope replied: "Don't you think to say *a man has his Wh—e* ought to go for little or nothing? Because *defendit numerus*, take the first ten thousand men you meet, and I believe you would be no loser if you betted ten to one that every single sinner of them, one with another, had been guilty of the same frailty." In the same letter Cibber refuted another of the charges brought against him by Pope's representing him in the *Dunniad* as *fast asleep*. "That," complained Cibber, "is a little too strong! Pert and dull at least you might have allowed me, but as seldom asleep as any fool."

Indeed, Cibber was no fool, and knew it, even when in his *Apology* he remarked: "The world may ask why

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I make my follies public ? Why not ? I 'have passed my time very pleasantly with them."

' Not that he minded being called a fool, so long as no man could honestly say he was "an uncheerful one"

It has been my aim, therefore, neither to condemn Cibber, nor in any way to whitewash him, but merely to show the man as he was, and having done so I find I must not only apologise for having written a life of Cibber but also for the fact that in this unpretentious biography the proportion of theatrical gossip to Cibber is that of the *intolerable deal of sack* to the *halfpennyworth of bread* of Falstaff's bill. Cibber's fortunes and interest were so inextricably bound up with histrionics, and he occupied the stage at such a momentous period in the affairs of the British theatre, that it has been impossible to separate him from them. Nor was his influence upon them negligible. Not only was he the greatest comedian of his day, he was also a pioneer in the development of comedy, and such a dominant personality in theatrical management that the improved conditions of the stage after the reign of Anne are in a great measure due to him. The sentimental comedy, unknown before him, was his valuable contribution to English literature

Had Colley stuck to comedy he might have been greater as an actor than his *Careless Husband* proved him as a dramatist. In the parts of fops and feeble old men he was never excelled. But as Scipio in Thomson's *Sophonisba* he was hissed off the stage, and the same fate befell him when he attempted the part of Iago, whom he made so palpably a villain that he never could have deceived a husband even more far gone in jealousy than was Othello

Cibber's domestic affairs he scarcely mentions, save to round off a sentence here and there; and we have to rest content with the dim glimpses we get of him as a family man, in the writings of his contemporaries, or in

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the bizarre pages of his wild daughter's *Autobiography*, which reads like a romance conceived under the influence of opium.

I do not claim in any respect to have shed new light on my subject, but if I can induce modern readers to take up for themselves Cibber's *Apology for his Own Life*—a book Swift sat up all night to read, and the great Lexicographer himself applauded in sonorous periods—I shall have done all I set out to do.

F. D. S.

*Hampstead,
December 1927*

The Life and Times of Colley Cibber

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

IN the centre of the great wall which enclosed old Bedlam, Moorfields, was a pair of finely wrought iron gates, above which reclined two colossal statues of Portland stone, representing Raving and Melancholy, and said to be the portraits of two patients (of whom one was Daniel, the mad porter of Oliver Cromwell) at one time confined in the asylum. These figures, which are now to be seen in the Guildhall Museum, were set up in 1680, and were the work of Caius Gabriel Cibber, a native of Flensburg and son of the King of Denmark's cabinet-maker. During the Commonwealth this gifted Dane came to England to seek his fortune. After the Revolution he was appointed sculptor-in-ordinary to William III ¹

In his official capacity Cibber had little to do, and added to his reputation by his private work. Sir Christopher Wren, who thought very highly of his ability, commissioned him to execute certain carvings in St. Paul's, among them the phoenix over the south door. But Cibber was in such financial difficulties that more often than not Wren had to seek him in a debtor's

¹ By warrant dated May 30th, 1693 Cibber received no salary for the first five years, after which he petitioned for a quarterly allowance

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prison. He was actually in the King's Bench prison when he carved the bas-relief on the pediment of the Monument, and went backwards and forwards daily to do his work.

But the elder Cibber's name is best remembered by a work of his other than these in perishable stone and metal—we know him best as the father of his famous son, Colley.

Ten years before his statues were set above the gates of Bedlam, Caius Gabriel had made a second essay in matrimony and had taken unto himself a wife by name Jane Colley, who claimed to be a descendant of no less a personage than that illustrious and industrious prelate, William of Wykeham¹

A year later Mrs Cibber presented her lord with a son, to whom was given his mother's surname. Colley Cibber first saw the light of day in Southampton Street, London, on November 6th, 1671. A fortnight later there appeared in the baptismal register of St. Giles-in-the-Fields the entry.

Nov: 29 1671 Christnings

Colley, sonne of Caius
Gabriell Sibber,² and
Jane ux

There were two other children, Lewis and Veronica.

¹ In after years, when Colley became prosperous, he had his crest engraved on a signet-ring, which he lost in 1703. In the advertisement issued by him for its recovery, the crest was duly set forth as "a cross wavy and chequer." This was a combination of the Cibber and Colley coats, of which the former (gules, a fesse checky Az and Arg) was borrowed from the Italian family Cibbo, and the latter, Arg a cross wavy sable.

² This spelling, apparently phonetic, is interesting, as showing that the name was by its owners pronounced with the soft "c", but pedantic Theobald, writing in 1730 to Warburton, rendered it *Keyber*.

Early Years

Little is known of the early childhood of the future 'Lord Foppington,' but it is easy to picture him, volatile, inquisitive, running in and out of his father's workshop, full of that restless energy which was to take him so far in after life.

But if you would see the child Colley 'in his habit as he lived,' here is his description taken from his inimitable *Apology*

" . . . I was the same inconsistent Creature I have ever been since ! Always in full spirits, in some small capacity to do right, but in a more frequent Alacrity to do Wrong . . . A giddy Negligence always possessed me, and so much, that I remember I was once soundly whipped for my theme, though my Master told me, at the same time, what was good of it was better than any boy's in the Form "

When he was twelve years old, Colley was sent to the Free School at Grantham, where he stayed long enough to pass through each form in turn, and where he early showed himself to be a devotee of Opportunity.

In February 1684-5 died Charles II, for whom Colley retained a spark of affection even after he became a Hanoverian. As a child he was sometimes taken by his father to the Royal Chapel, where he was much edified by the disedifying spectacle of King Charles with his seraglio

The King's death made such an impression on the schoolboy Cibber that he wept . . . What was less praiseworthy, he produced a Funeral Ode which he admits was the worst he ever wrote—and Colley's worst in the way of an Ode must have been stupendously bad.

In the writing of this, his first Ode, we see also the first manifestation of his keen watch on opportunity. The master of Colley's form had ordered each boy to make a funeral oration, by way of a variation on the hackneyed subjects of the scholastic themes of which

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both boys and master were weary. The variant, however, mightily disturbed all save Colley, who found it a task after his own heart. Staunch Hanoverian as, for bread-and-butter reasons, he afterwards became, one suspects that Colley's sympathies were with the Stuarts, those gorgeous, catastrophic figures, with whose passing Romance died out of English history.

When all the other boys had refused the task, Colley wrote his Ode. Drawing freely on his childish memories he tried to give a picture of the sad-eyed, sardonic monarch in his shabby coat, with his best friends—his little spaniels—yelping round his legs, and his corrupt courtiers fawning upon him in the guise of friends the while they laughed in their sleeves to think how easily he was beguiled; little deeming that, whoever else was beguiled, the ablest of the Stuarts most emphatically was not. The young poet dwelt lovingly on his late Majesty's affability, but ran amok in his chronology by ascribing the King's demise to the shock he had received on hearing of the death of Arlington *a week previously*. As a matter of fact Arlington survived his royal master by several months; but when he came to describe his first Ode in his *Apology*, Cibber had forgotten the facts. He is always, however, a broken reed in the matter of dates.

Though Colley went to the head of his form for his oration, he had to pay heavily for his preferment; but he cared as little for that as in after life he heeded the sneers of his rivals, which he welcomed on account of the publicity they afforded him.

Throughout his life it is plain that Cibber had not been dowered at birth with the gift of Friendship. Even at school he was less popular than notorious. He was the butt of his companions, none of whom really cared for him, though a few courted him when his star was in the ascendant. No doubt much of his unpopularity then, as later, arose from the fact that he was apt

Early Years

to make fun of people, without meaning to be unkind, and never expecting offence to be taken since none was by him intended. His tongue ran away with him to an extent which he had not the good breeding tactfully to cover up. For one so quick as he to take the slightest hint of Opportunity, Colley was singularly dense where other people's feelings were concerned.

Apropos of this trait, the boy once had an unpleasant lesson, which profited him little. He was much astonished and hurt when, after a bigger boy had given him a severe drubbing, another, to whom he was attached, cried joyfully :

“ Beat him ! Beat him ! ”

In private Colley asked his friend what he meant by such unfriendly conduct, and why he had thus spurred Colley's enemy to victory.

“ Because,” was the significant reply, “ you are always jeering at me ! ”

After the episode of the Funeral Ode Cibber's lot was by no means a happy one. He was sent to Coventry by his form-mates, who considered him to be an insufferable prig¹ that had betrayed them by doing what they would not do themselves. To make matters worse, Colley's master, by way of reward, took the boy out riding with him whilst the others toiled at uncongenial tasks.

Yet young Colley did not profit by experience. With all his keen opportunism this was a lesson he was never to learn. On the Coronation of James II the boys asked for a holiday, which was granted on condition that one of them wrote an Ode to the occasion. Gladly rushed in Master Cibber where angels feared to tread. In half an hour he had written an Ode worse, if possible, than the first. The desired holiday was granted, but any gratitude the boys may have felt to him who had won it was swamped in wrath at the peacock airs of the future Laureate, who so preened himself on his success that his

¹ To use his own expression, “ a pragmatcal Bastard ”

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irate companions with one accord decided to leave him out of their plans for the day.

Colley, with characteristic philosophy, consoled himself with thinking them jealous, and went about his own concerns, rejoicing.

Never was there a child more obviously father of the man!

In 1687 young Cibber was sent, with many maternal injunctions to take care of himself and of the meagre purse containing the bare sum necessary for his travelling expenses, to stand for election into the College founded by his ancestor, William of Wykeham. With the general looseness and impracticability which so often go with the artistic temperament, the elder Cibber had a hazy notion that his son had only to flourish his pedigree under the revered noses of the authorities at Winchester to be admitted forthwith, and Colley was packed off with no recommendation save his own scant scholarship and the pedigree aforesaid.¹

As might have been expected, Colley was rejected. He was charmed by his failure, since by this time his natural bent for the stage had evinced itself, and he by no means yearned after the life of a schoolman. But he dared not speak of his ambition at home, well knowing what a disappointment it would mean for his parents, who designed him for the Church and had no thought of him in any other vocation.

Finding his famous pedigree no 'Open Sesame!' to the college gates, the lad hurried back to town in time for the play, to afford admission to which he paid out of the sum allowed him for food on his journey. There was no fear of detection. Mr. Cibber was safe at Chatsworth, where he was executing certain statues for the Earl of Devonshire.

¹ Colley's brother Lewis was afterwards sent to Winchester with a more substantial recommendation—a statue of the founder, by Caius Gabriel. Lewis entered the school and there prospered. He died soon after he was ordained.

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After he had enjoyed his play, Cibber Junr. sat down to write to Cibber Senr. He confessed that he had failed to enter the college, and therefore begged he might be sent forthwith to the University rather than wait another year for an 'uncertain preferment.' Mr. Cibber, always an indulgent father, replied that when he returned to London he would himself take his son to Cambridge and settle him there, as he had some acquaintances among the Heads, for whom he had done work on the New Library, Trinity College. A few months later, the old gentleman sent for Colley to join him at Chatsworth, thinking it best for him to be under the paternal eye until he could go to Cambridge.

News of the landing of the Prince of Orange upset all these careful plans, and changed the whole course of our hero's life. When he got as far on his journey as Nottingham, he there, as he wrote in his *Apology* in a phrase Horace Walpole loved and was never tired of quoting, "*met the Revolution.*" His father had taken up arms with the forces of the Earl, who had mustered the great lords of the midland and eastern counties at Derby. Cibber Senr. judged that a little martial experience would be good for his son, and asked that the lad might take his place, as he himself was too old to endure the fatigues of a winter campaign. The Earl not only agreed to this but also promised that when things were more settled he would himself provide for Colley.

That sanguine creature at once saw himself with a commission. He had not been long in Nottingham before the Princess Anne fled from St. James's, and was reported to be on the way to Nottingham with two thousand of the King's dragoons.

The rumour of the Princess's arrival was followed by another to the effect that the Irish had surrounded the Protestant forces, which in alarm promptly decamped along the London Road, where they presently met with nothing more formidable than the absconding Princess

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attended by Lady Churchill and Lady Fitzharding. The valiant troopers pulled themselves together sufficiently to conduct her Highness into Nottingham, where she was received with acclamations, and that night dined with the officers, at Lord Devonshire's expense. Colley was present—not as an officer, but as a gentleman-servitor behind Lady Churchill's chair. Though the only words she addressed to him were "Wine and water!" the impressionable youth fell in love with her on the spot, and fifty years later paid her a flamboyant compliment in his *Apology*.

"She has lived (to all Appearances) a peculiar favourite of Providence," he wrote; "that few Examples can parallel the Profusion of Blessings which have attended so long a life of Felicity. A Person so attractive! a Husband so memorably great! an Offspring so beautiful! a Fortune so immense! and a Title which (when Royal Favour had no higher to bestow) she could only receive from the Author of Nature; a Great Grandmother without grey Hairs!"

Macaulay's tribute to the lady's old age was less handsome, but more in accordance with the truth.

"Sarah . . . lived to be that most odious and miserable of human beings, an ancient crone at war with her whole kind, at war with her own children and grandchildren, great indeed and rich, but valuing greatness and riches chiefly because they enabled her to brave public opinion and to indulge without restraint her hatred to the living and the dead."¹

Colley was not to spend too much time gazing at the handsome virago-wife of John Churchill. From Nottingham the troops marched to Oxford, where they remained until James fled to France and William and Mary ascended the throne.

Thus ended Colley's dreams of love and a martial

¹ *History of England*

Early Years

career, though he lingered awhile, hoping to receive his commission. But alas ! he had been forgotten.

When this dismal truth became apparent, Colley rejoined his father at Chatsworth. Here Mr. Cibber made him draw up a petition in Latin, entreating the Earl to do something for him. It was a weighty document, and when the Earl beheld it, intimidated by its length, he bade the sculptor send his son back to London in the following winter, when my lord would certainly see what could be done for him.

Naturally Colley spent all his time in London at the playhouses, hoping to get employment. With him lounged another stage-struck youth; by name John Verbruggen, who later became an actor of considerable note. It was Verbruggen who in after years quarrelled with one of Charles the Second's natural sons, the Duke of Grafton, to whom the actor applied an offensive epithet. Ordered to apologise, Verbruggen walked on to the stage one afternoon and announced that he had called his Grace "the son of a —," adding ambiguously : "It is true, and I am sorry for it."

This precious couple, Colley and John, might have been seen indefatigably hanging about Drury Lane and growing more stage-struck every day. When the playhouses were closed, "that ancient worm the Devil" found Cibber other employment, in gambling with low associates, during those empty days of waiting on a great man's favour.

At last, fearful lest the Earl's nebulous promise should materialise into preferment in some other profession, Colley decided to take the bull by the horns at the first opportunity. As soon as he heard that my lord had spoken of recommending him to Lord Shrewsbury, the Secretary of State, Colley knew it was time to speak. The choice between State preferment and the stage was quickly made, and Master Colley turned his back on his father's hopes to follow the Ignis Fatuus of his own.

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Thus once more was the proverb exemplified, that "it's an ill wind which blows nobody any good." The westerly gale which brought William III to England and drove James II out of it, wafted Colley Cibber to the foot of the ladder he was to mount to Fame. But for that favouring wind, he might have entered the Church and spent his time in writing good sermons in place of bad Odes, for Cibber's prose was infinitely superior to his verse, which was, as Dean Swift called it, "prose on stilts . . . poetry fallen lame."

CHAPTER II

THE ENGLISH STAGE

THE better to understand the condition of the theatre at the time Cibber first joined the Drury Lane Company, a brief retrospect is necessary.

In the reign of Edward II it was ordained by Act of Parliament that a company of men "called Vagrants who had made Masquerades through the whole city" should be whipped out of London "because they represented scandalous things in the little Alehouses and other places where the Populace assembled."

But neither this Act nor the more famous one of 1571 pronounced actors to be rogues and vagabonds. The former was directed solely against the strolling players who had done much to bring the stage into disrepute;¹ and the latter Act merely threatened all such companies of players as set up their stages without the licence of at least two justices of the peace, and ordered them, *if they would escape being regarded as rogues and vagabonds*, to procure a licence to pursue their calling from the monarch, a peer of the realm, or some high Court official. In the actual wording of the Act it was required that "all Persons that be, or utter themselves to be, Proctors, Procurers, Patent Gatherers or Collectors for Gaols,

¹ As Stow, that careful observer, was later to note "Players in former times were retainers to noblemen, and none had the Privilege to act Plays but such. But what was once a Recreation, afterwards by Abuse became a Trade and Calling. The lewd Matters of Plays increased, and they were thought dangerous to Religion, the State, Honesty of Manners, and also for Infection in the time of Sickness"

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Prisons, or Hospitals, or Fencers, Bearwards, common Players of Interludes and Minstrels,¹ wandering abroad (other than Players of Interludes belonging to any Baron of the Realm, or any other honourable Personage of greater Degree, to be authorised to play under the Hand and Seal of Arms of such Baron or Personage) all Juglers, Tinkers, Pedlars, or petty Chapmen, wandering abroad, all wandering Persons, etc. : able in Body, using loytering, and refusing to work for such reasonable Wages as are commonly given, etc. : These shall be adjudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars, and punished as such.”²

Thus it will be seen, the force of the 1571 Act extended only to wandering players, not to the companies established in settled houses. Elizabeth and her courtiers were so liberal in granting permits that no player of standing had any difficulty in procuring the licence necessary for his social status.

Five years after the Act was passed, the Queen granted the first royal patent conceded in England to actors. During her reign there were at least six companies of adult actors, five of them holding the licences respectively of Leicester, Oxford, Sussex, Worcester, and Howard, Lord High Admiral, whilst the sixth held her Majesty's permit and was called *The Queen's Servants*. In addition there were three companies of boy-actors formed from the choristers of St. Paul's, the Chapel Royal, and from Westminster School.

William Shakespeare was a member of the company licensed by the Earl of Leicester.

¹ When the Bill was in Committee there seems to have been some discussion as to the words “Minstrels, Bearwards,” etc. but on May 30th, 1573, it was resolved by the House that these words should stand “qualified by Licences of the Justices of the Peace in such sort as upon the Committee hath been considered and agreed upon” Sir S. D'Ewes Journal of Votes, etc. in Reign of Elizabeth

² 39 Eliza cap 4

The English Stage

In 1603 James I granted a licence¹ to William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage, and "the rest of their associates, to act comedies etc.: at their usual house the Globe, or at any other convenient place whatsoever within our realms."

In 1604 James made his State entry into London, and nine of the "King's Servants" (Shakespeare first on the list) clad in scarlet robes, walked in the procession.

Thirty years later the fanatic William Prynne published a formidable volume² of 1006 crabbed pages of abuse directed against the stage; wherein he sought to prove, as he set forth in a Gargantuan title fitted to the size and weight (avoirdupois) of his book, that plays are "sinful, heathenish, lewd, ungodly spectacles, and most pernicious corruptions; condemned in all ages as intolerable mischiefs to Churches, to Republics, to the manners, minds, and souls of men; and that the profession of play poets, of stage-players, together with the penning, acting, and frequenting of stage-plays, are unlawful, infamous, and misbecoming Christians."

"There are five devils' chapels," declared Prynne, "in London; and yet in more extensive Rome, in Nero's days, there were but three, and those," he ends on a wail of anguish, "three too many."

Prynne was an author born out of due time. A little later he might have received sympathy and support. At the moment his attack was as offensive to the cultured minds among the Puritan party as to the Court itself. Selden and Whitelock met it by preparing a grand masque in which the Inns of Court answered the challenge, and in the following year Milton wrote his *Comus* for Ludlow Castle.

The matter might well have ended there, for Prynne's book was such a farrago of utter nonsense that it ought not to have been taken seriously. But there was an offensive passage in it against Henrietta Maria, and on

¹ Dated May 19th, 1603

² The *Histrion-mastix*.

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this pretext Laud unwisely made a martyr of the author. Prynne was dragged before the Star Chamber, dismissed from the Bar, deprived of his University degree, and set in the pillory. His ears were cropped from his head, he was heavily fined, and sentenced to imprisonment for life.¹ A hundred thousand Londoners lined the road when Prynne passed on his way to prison, so that his journey thither became a triumphal progress. In prison he wrote a new tract denouncing the bishops as "Lords of Lucifer," for which he was fined another £5000 and branded on both cheeks.

Prynne was released by order of the Long Parliament in 1640, and became member for Newport, Cornwall, eight years later, but opposed the measures which led to the execution of Charles I, and for an attack on Cromwell was again imprisoned. After the Restoration he was appointed to the office of Keeper of the Records of the Tower. Pepys, who dined with him on one occasion, found him "a good honest plain man, but in his discourse not very free or pleasant."²

During the Interregnum and the Protectorate the fortunes of the stage fell to as low an ebb as its deadliest enemy could have wished. On February 11th, 1647, an Act was passed ordering that "all stage galleries, seats, and boxes should be pulled down by Warrant of two Justices of the Peace, and further, that all actors of plays for the time to come being convicted, should be publicly whipped and all Spectators of Plays for every offence to pay 5s. for the use of the poor"³

This stern attempt to put Prynne's *Histrionomastix* into execution, and to suppress "the lascivious mirth and levity of players," had for result an increase of recruits to the Royalist army, but did not prevent the acting of plays. Most of the actors enlisted under the

¹ Neale's *History of the Puritans*

² Pepys' *Diary*.

³ Wright's *Historia Histrionica*

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royal standard, thus remaining *His Majesty's Servants* to the end, whilst those who stayed at home continued to act *sub rosa* in private houses. A few remained at the old Cockpit in Drury Lane until in the winter of 1648, in the midst of a play rather appropriately named *The Bloody Brother*, soldiers arrived to arrest them and hurried them off to prison in their stage attire, but did no more than detain them awhile and steal their clothes.¹

In 1659 Rhodes, formerly wardrobe-keeper at the Blackfriars, now a bookseller at Charing Cross, privately obtained a licence from the disgruntled powers (who were feeling sufficiently low in their minds to grant anybody anything) and gathered together a company which included Betterton, Cabe Underhill, and Kynaston. Thomas Betterton was the son of one of Charles I's cooks, and made his first appearance at the Cockpit in 1659. He was on the stage for fifty years, yet such was his humility and sterling worth that he confessed to Malone, just before he died, he was "still learning to be an actor." Both Pepys and Pope hailed him as the best they had ever seen, and Pope painted a portrait of him, which found a home in Caen Wood, Hampstead, the seat of Lord Mansfield.²

The scattered remnants of the old actors fitted up a theatre in Vere Street, Lincoln's Inn,³ and there acted as the King's Company, under Thomas Killigrew.⁴ In 1663 they removed to Drury Lane. Some months previously⁵ a patent had been granted to Sir William

¹ *Historia Histrionica*

² Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies* Wharton

³ Wright's *Historia Histrionica* Malone's *Historical Account of the English Stage*

⁴ Pepys relates how Killigrew as a boy would go to the Red Bull (an inferior playhouse in Clerkenwell), and there, "when a man cried to the boys, 'Who will go and be a devil?' then would he go in, and be a devil on the stage, and so get to see plays" He was (unofficially) Court Jester to Charles II

⁵ The Letters Patent granted to Killigrew bear date 25 April, 14 Car, II, 1662, those of Davenant 15 Jan 14 Car II, 1662.

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Davenant¹ whose company, called The Duke's, opened their theatre in Portugal Row, Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1662,² and there remained until they moved to a new house erected by subscription in Dorset Garden, Fleet Street, which Dryden called "the gaudy house with scenes." This was the last theatre to which the audience went in boats, and it was chiefly patronised by the bourgeoisie.

The fact that there were *two* theatres in Lincoln's Inn has fathered confusion in some stage histories. It was at the Vere Street house that actresses for the first time in England took the stage.³ Though an attempt had been made in Charles I's reign to introduce a company of French actresses, "they were hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted off the stage," as that dour Puritan Brand was "glad to say." Under the second Charles the ladies were more kindly received. The play in which they first appeared had a special prologue written by Thomas Jordan entitled "A Prologue to introduce the first Woman that came to act on the Stage in the Tragedy called the *Moor of Venice*." ⁴

It began :

"I came unknown to any of the rest,
To tell the news, I saw the lady drest "

and was couched throughout in a somewhat apologetic strain, mindful, no doubt, of the pippins of the last reign.

At the Vere Street playhouse Pepys first saw his admired Roxana in the *Siege of Rhodes*. This was the beautiful Elizabeth Davenport, with whom the Earl of Oxford fell in love. She rejected his addresses, and he deceived her with a mock marriage in 1662, after which she flung herself at the King's feet, demanding redress, and got it in the shape of an annuity of a thousand

¹ Son of an innkeeper, and god-child of Shakespeare, this worthy was fond of boasting in his cups that he was the poet's son

² Malone's *Historical Account of the English Stage*.

³ Malone.

⁴ Malone.

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crowns;¹ whereupon she returned to the stage, though her liaison with the Earl must have continued, since her son by him, Aubrey Vere, was not born until 1664.²

The patents of both Killigrew and Davenant contained a clause permitting all female parts to be taken by women.

Davenant boarded his principal actresses in his own house. Among them was Nell Gwynne's rival, Mary Davis (natural daughter of the Earl of Berkshire). She captivated Charles II by her singing of the ballad *My Lodging is on the cold ground*, which, as Downes quaintly puts it, "raised the fair songstress from her bed on the cold ground to the bed royal."³ Pepys ungallantly described the lady as a "homely jade," but Kneller's portrait shows her as a tall, handsome woman. Her daughter, Mary Tudor, married the Earl of Derwentwater. From such fine issues is our aristocracy sprung.

Both houses were closed during the Plague, and reopened at Christmas, 1666.⁴ In 1671-2 Drury Lane theatre was burnt down. Rebuilt by Wren it reopened in 1674. The new theatre in Dorset Garden opened in November 1671, under the management of Lady Davenant (Sir William died in 1668), Betterton, and Harris. In 1682, thanks to the King's intervention, Killigrew's and Davenant's companies were united and acted at Drury Lane; not, however, entirely abandoning the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, at which several plays were brought out after the union.

In 1687 Charles Davenant (who had been acting-manager for his mother, and succeeded to her patent rights on her death) transferred his interest to Alexander Davenant, who in turn sold it for £80 to Christopher Rich, in March 1690. This was a bad day for the Drury Lane Company. Rich, described by Gildon⁵ as "a

¹ *Memoirs of De Gramont*

² *Ward's Diary*

³ *Roscius Anglicanus*

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Comparison between the Two Stages*

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waspish, ignorant pettifogger," was a lawyer addicted to sharp practices, though he always contrived to remain within the law. His whole aim was to get money—and to keep it.

This unprepossessing individual disregarded the rights of all concerned in the patent, and appropriated all the profits, until by cunning he had become sole proprietor of Drury Lane. Cibber's description of Rich is interesting. "He was" (he wrote) "as sly a tyrant as ever was set at the head of a theatre; for he gave the actors more liberty and fewer days' pay than any of his predecessors, he would laugh with them over a bottle, and bite them in their bargains. . . . He kept them poor that they might not rebel, and sometimes merry that they might not think of it. All their articles of agreement had a clause in them that he was sure to creep out at."¹

One of Rich's expedients to raise money was that of paying his actors by giving them Benefits instead of proper adequate salaries. By this stroke, the miserable members of his company became more poverty-stricken than ever. As it was, Verbruggen and Powel, actors of the first rank, were only drawing £2 a week, whilst two others, Goodman and Griffin, were reduced to such straits that they had but one shirt and one bed between them. Once, Cibber relates, when one of them wished to visit his lady-love, he tried to wear the communal shirt out of his turn; and the subsequent argument was settled at the sword's point in their garret.

Things were in this cheerful condition when Cibber himself became a humble member of the Drury Lane Company.

¹ *Apology*



*Griffin and Johnson as Ananias and Tribulation in
"The Alchymist"*

Painted and engraved by P. van Bleeck

CHAPTER III

THE NOVICE

CIBBER's entry into the Drury Lane Company was owing to no merit of his own, but to another economic experiment on the part of Rich who, to save money, decreed that all young recruits to the stage should serve half a year's apprenticeship for nothing.

The prospect of hearing and seeing plays daily for nothing outweighed, in Colley's eyes, all other disadvantages. In fact, so sanguine was he that he probably never even realised there were disadvantages. He already saw himself acting with the famous Mrs. Bracegirdle, heedless of the fact that she was a star and he the least of supers.

It was at this juncture that Mrs. Bracegirdle made the bold gesture known to us as going on strike. Her grievance was that she had been ordered to understudy Mrs. Barry, who, trained by Davenant and Rochester, had made her name in *The Orphan* in 1680, when Mrs. Bracegirdle herself, aged six, made her first appearance as the page in the same play.

Brought up and trained by Betterton, Mrs. Bracegirdle had been the heroine of a social drama which enhanced her stage prestige. A certain Captain Hill and Lord Mohun concocted a plan to abduct the actress on her way home from the theatre to her lodgings in Howard Street. This plan miscarrying, the precious couple fell instead upon Mrs. Bracegirdle's stage-lover Mountford, who lived near by in Norfolk Street, and picked a quarrel with him, in the course of which he fell, fatally wounded.

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Mountford died next day. Hill fled. Mohun was tried and acquitted.¹ He afterwards fell in a duel, greatly to the annoyance of his wife, whose housewifely instincts were affronted when he was carried home and laid bleeding upon her best bed.

Congreve and Lord Lovelace were both enamoured of the fair Bracegirdle, but Genest was of the opinion that there was no foundation for the ill-natured things said about the "Romantick Virgin" (as Gildon called her) beyond "the extreme difficulty with which an Actress at this period of the stage must have preserved her chastity." If he meant that for a compliment the reverend gentleman rather spoilt its effect by adding in the next breath: "Mrs. Bracegirdle was perhaps a woman of a cold constitution."²

For nine months the novice Cibber drudged on, never losing faith in himself. He watched Opportunity like a cat at a mouse-hole, whilst others watched him with wonder at such persistence in the face of what seemed insurmountable obstacles. Cibber's voice, which was untuneful and apt to crack in moments of excitement, was against him from the first. Nor was his person calculated to attract favourable attention, for it was short, thick-set, and somewhat clumsy. Moreover he was "so lean as to be known by the name of *Hatchet Face*."³

Poor half-starved boy—no wonder he was lean! Food in the Cibber household cannot have been plentiful, with the head of the house always in debt and the eldest son not earning. The latter was not even known by his surname, but was contemptuously referred to at the theatre as *Master Colly*. Still he would not be dis-

¹ See Howell's *State Trials*, Vol XII

² Genest's *History of the Stage*

³ *The Laureat* According to Pope and judging by his portraits, he plumped out "like a partridge" in after years, though he never grew fat

The Novice

couraged. He was where he wished to be, and his day would dawn.

Through many weary months that was his only consolation, and the chance, when it did arrive, looked far more like defeat. In 1691 Colley was given a small part as Sir Gentle's servant in *Sir Anthony Love*. He had only to carry a message to Betterton, but he was so nervous that he bungled his part shockingly, putting out the whole scene. Betterton was furious. Between the acts he asked Downes, the prompter, who was the fool who had blundered so fatally.

"Master Colly," was the answer.

The veteran's small eyes gleamed, and the expression on his pock-marked face boded no good to the shivering culprit.

"Master Colly!" he roared "Then forfeit him!"

"Sir, he has no salary!" replied Downes.

The gleam gave place to a kindly twinkle.

"No salary? Then put him down for ten shillings a week—and forfeit him five!" commanded Betterton.¹

And it was so.

Fortune, having vouchsafed her devotee this favour, left him to sink or swim. Then came another straw of hope. By reason of his importunity Cibber was given the part of the Chaplain in Otway's play, *The Orphan*. Cardonell Goodman was present at the rehearsal and asked who Cibber was. A brother-actor replied: "That's he, behind you!"

Goodman turned, stared at the blushing youth, and slapped him on the shoulder.

"If he does not make a good actor, I'll be d——d!" cried Goodman. To those who knew Goodman, this lurid contingency seemed likely to materialise, whatever Colley's future

Not for nothing was Cardonell called "Scum" Goodman. Gentleman by birth, actor by inclination,

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*.

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rake by choice, he had been sent down from the University for defacing the portrait of the Duke of Monmouth. He then came to London, where he first filled the post of Page of the Backstairs—no sinecure in the reign of the Merry Monarch¹—then went on the stage, where he attracted the attention of that catholic and universal lover of men, the Duchess of Cleveland. She took only too kindly to Goodman, yet in 1684 he was convicted on a charge of trying to poison her sons, the Dukes of Grafton and Northumberland. To raise money to pay the fine imposed, Goodman turned highwayman. But, incredible as it may seem, he still remained friendly with her Grace, whom he called “his Duchess.” In 1695 Goodman was arrested in connection with a Jacobite plot to assassinate William, and sent to Newgate. He turned informer and, aided by O’Brien, the Jacobite adventurer, escaped to France, where he was committed to the Bastille. He died two years later, of fever.

Not a very auspicious patron, one would have said! But to Colley, the theatrical drudge, Goodman’s words of praise were the sweetest he had ever heard. Tears of joy started to his eyes and he felt (so he said afterwards) like Alexander and Charles XII at the respective heads of their victorious armies.

But his hour was not yet.

A third opportunity had to be waited and watched for and seized, before Master Colley got a firm footing on the ladder he had set himself to climb. When that chance came it did not find him asleep.

At a command performance of Congreve’s *Double Dealer* Kynaston was too ill to act his part of Lord Touchwood. Congreve himself suggested that the part should be given to the young man who had done so well in *The Orphan*.

It may have been a real belief in Cibber’s capacity which induced Congreve to notice him; or it may have been a case of deep calling unto deep. Colley was every

The Novice

inch a snob, and we have Voltaire's evidence that Congreve was another.¹

Whatever Congreve's reason for preferring Cibber to the part of Lord Touchwood, the actor acquitted himself so well that he earned the warmest congratulations from the kindly author who had given him his chance. As a result his princely salary was made more munificent by an additional five shillings per week, and later raised to twenty shillings. On this he felt justified in taking to himself a wife.

¹ See Voltaire's *Letters Concerning the English Nation*. The Frenchman, who had a great admiration for the English writer, called to see him while in London, and was told when he tried to bring the conversation round to literature that Congreve wished to be visited on no other footing than that of a gentleman, to which Voltaire retorted "Had you been so unfortunate as to be a mere gentleman, I should never have come to see you!"

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE

WHILE Cibber was still haunting the theatres in hope of being employed there, he was one day visiting at the house of a boon-companion named John Shore, a sergeant-trumpet. As the actor passed a certain door he heard a sweet voice singing to the accompaniment of a harpsichord. He paused to listen. At the end of the song, still held by the magic of a voice, Colley turned to his friend and demanded the singer's name.

"My sister, Jane," replied the soldier. "You will meet her anon, at the tea-board."

Colley was introduced, and the singer's fine eyes completed the work her voice had begun. She in her turn approved of Colley, as did not her father, who had dreamed of a better match for his girl than a poor player, son of a foreign and somewhat raffish sculptor.

In spite of Mr. Shore's objections the pair became engaged. Shore, to show his disapproval, spent the money intended for Jane's dowry on building for himself near the Thames a retreat thereafter known as "Shore's Folly."

Cibber says nothing in his *Apology* of his marriage, beyond the bare statement that he did "commit matrimony." Indeed, there is only one mention in his book of Jane, and that is in Chapter VIII, where he writes: "It may be observed too, that my muse and my spouse were equally prolific: that the one was seldom the Mother of a Child but in the same year the other made me the Father of a Play. I think we had about a dozen



Theophilus Cibber

Theophilus Cibber as Ancient Pistol

Line drawing from the Burney Collection

Marriage

of each sort between us; of both which kinds, some died in infancy and near an equal number of each was alive when I quitted the theatre."

Cibber regarded his growing family as a somewhat sinister joke, and was fond of saying, after he had lost every shilling of his week's salary at hazard or cards: "Now I must go home and eat a Child!"¹

The eldest—a girl—was born a year after the marriage. She was one of the three surviving when Cibber died. Of the rest of his human progeny there is abundant record of two, in whom no parent could take pride. These were his eldest son Theophilus, and his youngest daughter, Charlotte.

Theophilus was a wastrel who, born in a storm (on November 26th, 1703), lived stormily and perished in a storm. Always in debt, this singularly unattractive person managed somehow to endear himself to women sufficiently to marry twice. His first wife, Jenny Johnson, was an actress of some promise.² By her, Theophilus had two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth. To the former's Juliet her father in 1744 played the part of a somewhat over-ripe Romeo at the Haymarket.³

After his first wife's death on January 26th, 1733,⁴ Theophilus soon found consolation. In the following year he married Susannah Arne, sister of the composer. In 1738 Cibber commenced a suit against a Mr. Sloper who, he alleged, had seduced his wife. Theophilus claimed £5,000 damages, but was thankful to get £10. In 1739 he "popped Sir Thomas again in the pond." He brought another action against Sloper, claiming £10,000 and receiving £500 for reasons best known to the jury. Colley Cibber went into the witness box and

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*

² "She was a rising genius, likely to have proved a good actress if she had lived." Chetwood's *History of the Stage*.

³ Old playbill

⁴ *Daily Post* of that date She died of puerperal fever.

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there asserted that he had strongly opposed the marriage, and that he had given his daughter-in-law her theatrical training. If this were true (and there is no reason to suppose it was not) it goes far to prove that Cibber was not, as Johnson asserted, "ignorant of the first principles of his art,"¹ for Susannah Cibber rose to be an actress considered by Garrick² to be the greatest he had ever known.

Mrs. Cibber had a very beautiful voice, and her singing in the *Messiah* so enchanted Swift's friend, Dr. Delaney, when the opera was produced in Dublin (1741) that he rose in his place and cried: "Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee!"

Mrs. Cibber continued to live with Mr. Sloper until the day of her death in 1766. She is buried in the Cloisters, Westminster.

Theophilus himself was a good actor, in a flashy, grimacing style. He was a patentee of Drury Lane from 1730 to 1732. He then went to the Haymarket.

In 1753 Theophilus Cibber's name appeared on the title-page of *The Lives of the Poets*, which Dr. Johnson held to be the work of one Shiels, an amanuensis of his own. This gentleman, a Scot, had quarrelled with Cibber, and no doubt told the Doctor his own version of a somewhat shady story. It is true that Shiels did the hackwork of collecting and digesting material. But he was a very indifferent writer and a violent Jacobite, and Theophilus, who had, like his father, a facile pen, was engaged to edit Shiels' MS, rewriting where necessary. This he did so thoroughly that the bill for corrections in the proof startled the publisher, and Shiels wanted to send a challenge to his over-zealous Whig supervisor. That he did not do so was owing to the aforesaid publisher, who tactfully restrained the

¹ Boswell's *Life of Johnson*

² With whom she acted from 1755 to 1766. When told of her death he said. "Then Tragedy died with her."



M. Cibber

*Susannah Maria Cibber (born Arne), wife of
Theophilus Cibber*

Painted by T. Hudson, engraved by J. Faber, jun.

Marriage

infuriated Scot, and paid Theophilus twenty guineas for his work. Johnson also maintained that the (to him abhorrent) name of Cibber was only appended to the book to make the public think Colley had a hand in it. This story was scouted in the *Monthly Review* for May, 1792, three years before Johnson died, and nearly forty after Theophilus was drowned on his way to Dublin.

Charlotte, Cibber's youngest child, must be allowed a chapter to herself. To her we owe what little is known of Mrs. Colley Cibber, the wife who made so little impression on her husband that he never so much as mentioned her by name when he sat down to apologise for his own life. Yet, if he owed an apology to anyone, surely it was to his gentle, self-effacing Jane, of whom his erratic daughter spoke always with the greatest affection and respect. "This dear woman," she lovingly wrote in her *Autobiography*, "was possessed of every personal charm that could render her attractive and amiable."¹

From the same authority we learn that Mrs. Cibber was an invalid, afflicted with asthma, which forced her to live a retired life in the country, far removed from the glitter of the stage adorned by her feather-pated family. She was herself no mean actress. She took the part of *Hillaria*² in her husband's first play, *Love's Last Shift*, and in the previous year appeared as Galatea in *Philaster*. But evidently her acting made no impression on anyone, least of all on Colley. There is no doubt he neglected her, though he remained more or less faithful to her, and probably, in those virtuous women who shine, starlike, from his plays, we may find her lovingly depicted by him. His attachment to the gaming table, after he rose to comparative affluence, must have grieved her sorely. A gambler he unquestionably was, and his enemies exaggerated his propensity. Steele in later years

¹ *Narrative of the Life of Charlotte Charke.*

² Davies Genest.

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took up the cudgels on Cibber's behalf, and set himself to refute certain allegations made by the anonymous writer of a pamphlet entitled *The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*, who declared that in two years Cibber had squandered six thousand pounds at the Groom Porter's "without making the least provision for his wife or children." To this Steele replied: "You tell a notorious lye in saying *he lost six thousand pounds one season, without providing for his family*; when everyone that knows him can tell you he settled three thousand pounds that very year upon his children."¹

Thomas Davies also mentions Cibber's love of gambling. "This attention to the gaming-table would not, we may be assured, render Cibber fitter for his business of the stage. After many an unlucky run at Tom's Coffee House² he has arrived at the playhouse . . . not too well prepared in the part he was to act. I have seen him at fault when it was least expected; in parts which he had acted a hundred times."³

But we are anticipating. In the early years of his career, Cibber had not the means to gamble to any extent. He was only earning (and that intermittently) one pound a week, on which he had to support an ailing wife and steadily increasing family. He sometimes went unpaid for weeks, and declared that "the Patentees made it their rule never to pay their people when the money did not come in, nor then neither, but in such proportions as suited their conveniency."⁴

The twenty pounds a year allowed him by his father was a very slender strand of hope, and none too regularly paid, we may suppose, since the elder Cibber was a gambler himself and such a very frequent visitor to the

¹ *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet called The Characters and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* For further particulars of the pamphlet and of Steele's answer see Chapter XVII

² In Russell Street

³ *Dramatic Miscellanies*

⁴ *The Apology*

Marriage

King's Bench and Marshalsea prisons. But young Colley was indomitable. His disposition, as one of his kindlier critics once remarked, "must have been worth £2,000 a year to him." When things looked so black they could not well grow blacker, Benedict the married man, the devotee of Opportunity, decided that the pen was mightier than the buskin, and wrote a play.

CHAPTER V

DISCORD

A CONSIDERABLE volume of water had yet to flow under the bridge before the time was ripe for Cibber's play, though he must have been considering it, if not actually writing it, in the three years which followed his marriage.

The internecine warfare between patentee and players at Drury Lane came to a head in 1695, when Betterton obtained a new licence and went to the Lincoln's Inn house (Portugal Street), taking with him Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Barry, and other dissatisfied mimes.

This secession of the older actors gave the young ones a chance, and everyone had leisure to give their minds to business when the theatres were closed for six weeks after the death of Queen Mary.¹ The enforced holiday over, the Patentees at Drury Lane offered higher salaries to those players who had not deserted them. Amongst these were Cibber, Powel, Verbruggen, and Samuel Sandford.

On the style of the last-named Cibber moulded his

¹ When Cibber produced a funeral Ode, which opened with the lines

*"Tun'd to the solemn strains of general woe,
Do thou, my Muse, thy Pious sorrows show,
And let the mighty Consternation prove,
That Grief, though Cold, as much of Heat may move,
As the first Raptures of aspiring Love——"*

and ended with a piece of cold comfort for the bereaved King, who had, so the Poet informed him

"Lost a Queen on Earth, and gain'd a Friend in Heaven"

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own, though Sandford was by no means a great actor. Yet Charles II esteemed him the "best villain" [on the stage] "in the world." His acting lay in his gift of facial expression rather than in his elocution or grace of body. In person he was round-shouldered and insignificant, with a high-pitched, squeaking voice (in which respect Cibber copied him faithfully, probably to hide the defects of his own vocal chords).

Samuel Sandford refused to go to Lincoln's Inn because of his agreement with Rich. This he produced.

"Here it is," he declaimed. "*To Samuel Sandford, Gentleman, threescore shillings a week.*"

Cabe Underhill, who was present on this occasion, used ever after to twit Sandford with his agreement, and called him "Samuel Sandford, Gent, my man Samuel."

If Sandford managed to get his salary paid regularly, he had less cause to be discontented than the others, for £3 a week was princely. After the secession Cibber was given thirty shillings a week, Powel and Verbruggen had their salaries doubled, and the rest were paid in proportion. But they all had to work harder than ever before.

The company at Lincoln's Inn being for the moment *hors de combat* by reason that their theatre was not yet fitted up, the Patentees of Drury Lane made the most of their opportunity. They revived Aphra Behn's¹

¹ Aphra Behn, the daughter of a barber, was the Georges Sand of the Restoration period. She had had a varied career before she became a writer. The widow of a Dutchman, she was, when war broke out between Holland and England, sent to Antwerp as a spy. On information received, she warned the English Government of De Witt's intended sally up the Thames, but was ridiculed. Mrs Behn was the author of several plays, all characterised by an even grosser indelicacy than that of most Restoration dramatic literature. One of her more praiseworthy achievements was the introduction of milk punch into England. She died in 1689, and is buried in the Cloisters, Westminster.

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Abdelazar, or The Moor's Revenge. Unfortunately, this fell flat. After the first performance a new prologue was judged necessary, and Cibber volunteered to write it on condition he was allowed to speak it. This was judged as bad as having no prologue at all. Cibber, however, wrote it, and George Powel was entrusted with it, while the author had to content himself with a fee of two guineas and a back seat. He pocketed the one with joy and occupied the other with such philosophy as was his. But he must have found it a sore strain not to stand on his back seat and shout when his prologue was received with loud applause. Since he considered this applause should have been addressed to him, the back seat irked him still more, for Cibber was not sufficiently generous to consider that his prologue owed anything to Powel's rendering. Cibber's was not the nature which trumpets the praise of others and hushes its own merits on muted strings.

Three weeks later, the Lincoln's Inn Company opened with Congreve's *Love for Love*, which had a fine reception and ran until the end of the season. It must have been gall and bitterness to the rival company to reflect that, but for the rupture, this play might have been produced at Drury Lane, where it was first read and accepted. The quarrel, however, had decided Congreve to wait before signing the agreement; and in the end he offered his play to Betterton. He now contracted with the Lincoln's Inn company to write a play a year, in return for a share in the profits of the theatre. This was not an unusual course of procedure. Dryden had agreed to write three plays a year for the King's Playhouse, in return for a share which amounted to three or four hundred pounds. He got the money, but the plays were not forthcoming.¹

The rivalry between the two theatres waxed fierce, and each did its best to steal a march on the other. On

¹ Malone's *Life of Dryden*

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one occasion the Lincoln's Inn Company was billed to play *Hamlet* on a Tuesday. Hearing this on Saturday, their rivals decided they too would play *Hamlet*—but on Monday. The Lincoln's Inn Company promptly changed their bill for Saturday from *The Old Bachelor* to *Hamlet*. Powel, who was now leading man at Drury Lane, proposed that *Hamlet* should be given up and *The Old Bachelor* substituted, too late for the others to change again. Powel further proposed to reproduce Betterton in the leading rôle. He had once aped him in the part of Falstaff, in which he not only "hit Mr. Betterton's manners and tone of voice," but also, "to make the picture more like, mimicked the infirmities of distemper, old age, and the afflicting pains of the gout, which that great man was often seized with."¹

Not quite a kindly performance, nor in the best taste, perhaps. But all's fair in love and war. Powel's offer was accepted, and the new bills issued, with a footnote to the effect that the part of the Old Bachelor would be "*performed in imitation of the Original*"

At the last moment a disconcerting discovery was made. No one knew a word of the play, and no one had been cast for the rôle of Fondlewife, a part which, created by Doggett,² had in the original production helped to make the play!

What was to be done?

Suddenly some bright spirit remembered that young

¹ Chetwood's *History of the Stage*.

² The first recorded appearance of Doggett at Drury Lane was in 1691, in D'Urfey's *Love for Money*. In 1695 he joined Betterton's company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, where he created the part of Ben, in *Love for Love*, a rôle Congreve is said to have written for him. Cibber praised his acting, and Steele considered him "the best of comedians". He was such a master of make-up that Sir Godfrey Kneller told him he was a better painter than himself.

In support of his politics Thomas Doggett gave a badge and buff-and-orange livery, to be rowed for by six watermen annually, in honour of the Hanoverian Succession.

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Cibber, in a flash of more than his wonted imbecility, had been heard to say he "had a mind to play that part." It was just like his impudence, and no one had thought any more of his remark until it was recalled as a desperate remedy for a desperate predicament. But a titter went round the company when Powel sent for Colley, adding ungraciously, as the messenger departed in search of him :

"If the fool hath a mind to blow himself up at once, let us give him a clear stage for it!"¹

As it happened, "the fool" had made a very careful study of Doggett's Fondlewife, and acquitted himself therein entirely to his own satisfaction. He did not care about anyone else's. The fact that Doggett himself was present at the performance added zest to the entertainment.

This must be accounted Cibber's first success, and the character of Fondlewife was afterwards associated with him. It was one of the last parts in which he appeared.

Yet his initial performance did not, at the time, increase Cibber's fame or fortune, for though his acting drew large audiences which must materially have benefited the Patentees, the actor himself was still receiving no more than thirty shillings a week.

When the play was withdrawn, Cibber returned to the obscurity from which even he must have been beginning to feel it was unlikely he would ever emerge. Whenever he asked for a special part, he was told it was not "in his way."

"I think anything, naturally written, ought to be in everybody's way that pretends to be an actor," he once plucked up courage to retort.

Rightly or wrongly, Colley supposed that this persistent refusal of parts was the result of jealousy among his fellow-actors. It was far more likely to have been

¹ Genest. Davies.

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the result of his innate conceit coupled with his lifelong trick of poking fun. Thespians are a touchy and a jealous race; and Cibber was never the most diplomatic of men, though he loved to think himself a Prince of Tact, as the spiritually *maladroit* always do.

CHAPTER VI

COLLEY'S FIRST PLAY

JEREMY COLLIER'S *View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* appeared in March 1697/8—not before it was needed. The immorality and indecency of the stage by this time was such that ladies, if they were bold enough to go to a new play, were forced to wear masks, presumably to hide their blushes, or the fact that they could not blush. This custom of wearing masks dated from Restoration times, and greatly facilitated the pursuit of scandalous intrigues. In fact the term *Vizard-mask* had long been a synonym for *prostitute*, in which sense it was frequently used by Dryden in his Prologues and Epilogues. Not until the reign of Anne was an edict issued to forbid the use of these dainty but dangerous trifles of silk or velvet.

Tertullian has a story, gravely quoted by Collier, of how a priest, exorcising the devil out of a woman, asked how he had dared enter a Christian. The devil replied that he had caught this particular Christian on his own ground—she was at the theatre! But it must be conceded that quotations from the Fathers against the stage were no argument for future ages, since the stage of their day was far worse than anything which came, or could come, after; though Genest went a little too far when he declared Nell Gwynne and her sisterhood to have been Vestal Virgins in comparison with some of the actresses of ancient Rome.¹

The nonjuring cleric, Collier, was no respecter of persons. He made his attack courageously and unspar-

¹ *History of the English Stage.*

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ingly, and unlike Prynne, at the right moment. But Collier spoilt his own effect by his pedantry and by discovering indecency where it did not exist. Were he not so deep in earnest he had been supremely ridiculous at times in his vehemence, as when he wrote, after quoting various plays which, but for his citations, would never have been heard of again: "There are few of these last quotations but what are plain blasphemy. They look reeking as it were from Pandæmonium and almost smell of fire and brimstone. This is an eruption of Hell with a vengeance—there are outrageous provocations enough to exhaust the judgments of heaven, and sink this Island in the sea."

Thus Collier stirred up much mud which had been better left to sink to its own level.¹

Another of Collier's mistakes was that of attributing to the influence of the corrupt literature of the stage the social immorality rampant during the Restoration period, when, as an observer none too nice himself wrote: "If there be hell, it is here; no faith, no truth, no love, nor any agreement between man and wife, nor friends."² This state of affairs was not brought about by the literature or drama of the period; rather was it the result of a state of affairs which was nothing more nor less than the inevitable reaction from the Puritanism of the preceding period. Dryden, one of the dramatists chiefly attacked, pointed out this defect in Collier's argument, in his epilogue to Fletcher's *Pilgrim* when he wrote:

"Perhaps the Parson stretched a point too far,
When with our theatre he waged a war
He tells you that this very moral age
Received the first infection from the Stage;
But sure a banish'd Court, with lewdness fraught
The seeds of open vice, returning, brought"

¹ As Cibber was not slow to note. In the prologue to his play, *Xerxes*, he gravely suggested that all schoolgirls should read Collier's book "to learn what are the indecent plays."

² Pepys' *Diary*

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Collier's pamphlet had a great success, and moved some of those who in 1696 had been scandalised by his pronouncing the Absolution over Sir John Friend and Sir William Parkyns at Tyburn, when they were executed for their complicity in the Assassination Plot, to forgive this implied insult offered by Collier to King William.

An unfortunate result of the pamphlet, however, was the springing up of a new trade for dwellers in the underworld of rascaldom, who made it henceforth their business to attend the theatres for the purpose of informing against the actors when they used immoral and profane expressions. Under this new imposition, both Betterton and Mrs. Bracegirdle were fined.¹

Congreve wrote an indignant reply to Collier, as did Vanbrugh; to both of whom the strenuous Nonjuror replied that contest was his delight, and he was not "frighted" from his purpose. Victory remained with Collier, and a new era in dramatic literature was ushered in by his fearless attack upon the old.

It must have been a spark of genius which had fired Cibber to write, two years before Collier's pamphlet came out, a play exactly suited to the new morality. Did he, with a prescience unusual to his youth and experience, foresee the coming reaction, or was it just chance? We can, I think, entirely eliminate the latter element. Of Cibber's first play, produced at Drury Lane in 1695, Davies wrote, "It is a singular fact in the history of the English Stage that the very first comedy acted after the libertine times of the Restoration, in which any purity of manners, and respect to the honour of the marriage-bed were preserved, was Cibber's *Love's Last Shift, or the Fool in Fashion*."²

In this play, practically every element of the sentimental comedy is to be found, and Cibber's importance in the development of this form, as a change from the

¹ *Biographia Dramatica*

² Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*.

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Restoration type, is shown even at this early stage of his own development. Perhaps he was not fully aware himself of what he was doing, though later on he openly professed his desire to reform the stage. Reform came not so much from within as from a changed public conscience, and Cibber—devotee of Opportunity that he was—did but answer, with his sentimental comedies, a general demand of his age, rather than call upon that age to purge itself of error. With all his faults Cibber was never a hypocrite and did not set up to be a moralist. In later years Mrs. Porter, the actress,¹ once asked him how it was that he, who could depict such admirable portraits of Virtue in his plays, should live as though he were a stranger to it.

"Madam," replied Cibber, "the one is absolutely necessary, the other is not."²

The main action of *Love's Last Shift* deals with the reformation of a wandering husband, and though Cibber declared it to be entirely his original conception, the device of leading Loveless to return to his deserted wife by her pretence of being a new mistress is suggestive not only of Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well*, but also of Shirley's *Gamester*. The great innovation in Cibber's play lies in its very moral ending, and the definite decision of the hero to reform, as expressed by him in the words :

"By my example taught, let every man, whose fate has bound him to a marry'd life, beware of letting loose his wild desires : for if experience may be allowed to judge, I must proclaim the folly of a wandering passion. The greatest happiness we can hope on earth

And sure the nearest to the joys above,
Is the chaste rapture of a virtuous love "

¹ Of whose acting Dr Johnson said he never saw her equalled "in the vehemence of rage" Boswell's *Life*.

² Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*.

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Unfortunately the happy *dénouement* heralded by these words is the weak spot in the play. The weakness of characterisation, not perhaps to be wondered at in so young an author, gives no hint of Loveless's capability to reform, and we are left with no great hope that Amanda's future with her lord will prove happier than her past without him, especially since she admits herself that only her "disguise of vicious love has charmed him even to a madness of impure desire," which he satisfies by the expedient of (to quote another character in the play) "robbing his own orchard." Nevertheless, the fact remains that Cibber's first play was undoubtedly a step forward in its treatment of fundamental morality, and marked the beginning of a new mode, not an inconsiderable achievement for a writer aged only twenty-four, surely?

Since the Epilogue in a measure sets forth what Cibber had in his mind when he wrote *Love's Last Shift*, it is well worth inserting here.

EPILOGUE TO LOVE'S LAST SHIFT

Spoken in the Character of Cupid

Now, gallants, for the Author First to you,
Kind city gentlemen o' th' middle row,
He hopes you nothing to his charge can lay,
There's not a Cuckold made in all his play,
Nay, you must own, if you believe your eyes,
He draws his pen against your enemies
For he declares, to-day he merely strives
To maul the beaux—because they maul your wives
Now, Sirs, to you whose sole religion's drinking,
Whoring, roaring, without the pain of thinking,
He fears he's made a fault you'll ne'er forgive,
A crime beyond the hopes of a reprieve
An honest rake forgo the joys of life,
His whores and wine, t' embrace a dull, chaste wife!
Such out-of-fashion stuff! But then again,
He's lewd for above four acts, gentlemen,

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For faith, he knew, when once he'd changed his fortune
And reform'd his vice, 'twas time to—drop the curtain.
But then the ladies' taste is more refined,
They, for Amanda's sake, will sure be kind
Pray let this figure once your pity move,
Can you resist the pleasing God of Love ?
In vain my prayers the other sex pursue,
Unless your conquering smiles their stubborn hearts subdue.

Apparently this moving appeal had its effect on the ladies, and on their spouses too, for *Love's Last Shift* was received, Davies tells us, "with the greatest applause."¹

But it was ever Colley's fate to have his best work attributed to someone else. *Love's Last Shift* was so good that his enemies said he could not possibly have written it. Cibber disarmed their criticisms by taking them as compliments—a favourite trick of his.

He had written a part in his play for himself, that of Sir Novelty Fashion, and he insisted on playing it, though Southerne, the author of *Oroonoko*, had such a poor opinion of Colley's capacity that he would only answer for the success of the play if the author did not spoil it by his acting.

Contrary to expectation, Cibber did not spoil his play, and the comedy was a great success; yet its author languished in parts uncongenial until the following year, when Sir John Vanbrugh wrote his *Relapse* as a sequel to *Love's Last Shift*, with a special part in it for Cibber. Here was the first big chance of our hero's lifetime and he rose to it nobly. He created the part of Lord Fopping-

¹ Lord Dorset, then Lord Chamberlain, and in former days as Charles Buckhurst, one of the wildest of the Restoration rakes and boon-companion of the Merry Monarch, pronounced it "the best first Play that any Author in his Memory had produced," and added that "for a young Fellow to show himself such an Actor and such a Writer in one Day, was something extraordinary."

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ton,¹ moulded by Vanbrugh on his own Sir Novelty Fashion, and it remained Cibber's most famous rôle to the end of his life. The wig he wore in *The Relapse* was, for size and price, the talk of the town, and bade fair to eclipse its wearer—in more senses than one; for Cibber was a small man and the wig was colossal. It was brought on to the stage in a sedan, and the actor donned it publicly to the admiration of all beholders.² In after years Cibber thought nothing of spending forty guineas a time on the thatching of his head, and there exists a receipt signed by him for £12 : 7 . 0, which includes seven guineas for a wig—a very cheap affair, though at the time of his first real success Cibber could scarcely have afforded to pay even so much, since he was still drawing no more than thirty shillings a week. Therefore the famous Periwig (which a certain Colonel Brett—of whom we shall hear more later—coveted and eventually bought) must have been paid for out of the theatrical exchequer, wherein the dressing of Cibber in the part of Lord Foppington was a heavy item. The costliness of his clothes aroused the jealousy of Cibber's colleague, Powel, who as Cæsar Borgia³ was not half so well dressed; “though,” comments Cibber in his *Apology*, “he knew at the same time my Lord Foppington filled the house, when his bouncing Borgia would do little more than pay fiddles and candles to it.”

¹ In this character Cibber portrayed the perfect fop of King William's reign, with sword-knot, steinkirk, plume, and full peruke. He afterwards reintroduced it in *The Careless Husband* in which Mr Oldfield as *Lady Betty Modish* offered a companion-portrait to the Fop as the Coquette in high life. “Cibber,” declared Davies, “was the first who introduced men and women of high quality on the stage, and gave them language and manner suitable to their rank and birth.”

² “E'er since Sir Fopling's periwig was Praise,” wrote Pope years later, after he had enshrined Cibber in the *Dunciad* as hero.

³ In Lee's tragedy of that name

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Human nature does not change—a platitude the more forcibly brought home to us as we contemplate, in conjunction with the petty squabbles of “the” profession to-day, the long since forgotten heartburnings of a Bracegirdle over a rival’s paduasoy, and the railings of a mimetic Borgia at the set of my Lord Foppington’s coat. . . .

CHAPTER VII

THE WAR OF THE THEATRES

ELATED with the success of his comedy, Cibber was unhappily seized with a passion for writing tragedy. This brought forth his *Xerxes*. The patentees and actors of Drury Lane wisely refusing to touch it, the young author offered it to the rival house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where it was produced in 1699. It only lasted out the first performance, and then was consigned to the oblivion it deserved. Not even the superb acting of Mrs. Betterton and Mrs. Barry could save it.

In this year (1699) the Lord Chamberlain sent an order to both houses calling attention to indecent and profane expressions used by their actors on the stage, and warning them not to repeat the offence. At the same time the Middlesex Grand Jury, in a burst of Puritanism, indicted both theatres, as well as the Bear Garden, as public nuisances. It was a bad time for "the" profession. Audiences could hardly be gathered without "the additional invitation of a Signor Fideli, a Monsieur l'Abbé, or some such foreign regale expressed in the bottom of the bill."¹

Rich's aim being to make money rather than to produce good plays, he now opened the upper galleries to footmen and other domestics who formerly had not been allowed to join the audience until after the fourth act.² Before the Union they were allowed in the theatre at the beginning of the performance, but became so great

¹ Wright's *Historia Histrionica*, 1699

² Gildon's *Comparison between the Two Stages*.

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a nuisance that Dryden, in an Epilogue, bitterly complained of them.¹

In this connection it may be noted that in an old Haymarket playbill appears an announcement which marks the inception of the queue system. "The ladies," runs a footnote, "are desir'd to send their Servants to keep their Places by Four o'clock." In another playbill it is announced that "servants will be allow'd to keep places on the Stage, which will be commodiously enclosed."

The wily Rich, to whom the profit, not the play, was the thing, hoped, by letting in the lackeys attendant upon the more aristocratic members of the audience, to get the recommendation of the former, and so fill the house. Fill it he did—with noise. Never were the "gods" so vociferous as at Drury Lane under Christopher Rich's management, and long after. Cibber complained of the nuisance, but it was not remedied until 1737, when the privilege extended to lackeys was abolished, and rioting ensued. Three hundred footmen broke into Drury Lane and well-nigh wrecked it before they could be ejected.

But no artifice, not even the engagement of a troupe of rope-dancers, could attract a public for the time being obsessed with politics, and more interested in the efforts of successive Whig and Tory Governments to seek peace and ensue it, than in the histrionic ravings of a Richard III or the corybantic flutterings of French dancers. Drury Lane sustained a further blow in the defection of George

¹ "Then for your lackeys and your train beside,
By whate'er name or title dignified,
They roar so loud, you'd think behind the stairs
Tom Dove and all the brotherhood of bears :
They've grown a nuisance beyond all disasters,
We've none so great, but their unpaying masters.
We beg you, Sirs, to beg your men, that they
Would please to give you leave to hear the play."

Epilogue on the Union.

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Powel, who joined the Lincoln's Inn company for a season. Cibber, too (though he was careful not to mention it in his *Apology*, wherein he never referred to the things of which he—it is to be hoped—felt ashamed), went over to the rival house for a short time in 1696. In the preface to his *Woman's Wit* he wrote: "During the time of my writing the first two acts I was entertained at the New Theatre. . . . In the middle of the third act, not liking my station there, I returned again to the Theatre Royal."

In leaving Drury Lane, he was not only behaving disloyally, but illegally. The patents of Killigrew and Davenant each contained a special clause to prevent actors performing outside their own companies.¹

But under such a manager as Rich, no man could be blamed for thinking of no rights or wrongs other than his own. There followed a regular epidemic of desertions. In 1697 Doggett left the company, and a warrant was issued for his arrest.

Powel, however, though a good actor, was no great loss. He was generally drunk, and when sober, walked the streets with his sheathed sword in his hand to keep off the Sheriff's officers who dogged his footsteps. In his *Apology* Cibber allowed himself to indulge in a lengthy dissertation upon Powel's negligence in the preparation of his parts. A more flagrant case of Satan reproving sin can hardly be imagined, for Cibber himself often forgot his cue, though he "dexterously supplied the deficiency of his memory by prolonging his ceremonious bow to the lady and drawling out: 'Your humble servant, Madam!'" to an extraordinary length; then,

¹ "The better to preserve amity betwixt the said companies, and that one may not encroach upon the other by any direct means, we will and ordain that no actor or other person employed about either of the said theatres shall be received by the other Company without the written consent of the Governor of the Company whereof the said person, ejected or deserting, was a member."

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taking a pinch of snuff, and strutting deliberately across the stage, he gravely asked the prompter, *what is next?*"¹

If things were bad at the Theatre Royal they were worse at Lincoln's Inn. "To gratify the desires and Fancies of the Nobility and Gentry"² Betterton obtained the services of singers and dancers from abroad, such as Madame Subligny,³ Margarita de l'Epine,⁴ M. Balon, Maria Gallia, and others. The sums expended on these doubtful departures from legitimate drama seriously depleted the exchequer, without having the desired result. In 1704 Betterton transferred his licence to Captain Vanbrugh⁵ who built a new theatre in the Haymarket, on the foundation-stone of which was inscribed *The Little Whig*, in honour, Cibber tells us, "of a lady of extraordinary beauty, then the celebrated toast and pride of that party."⁶

When the new theatre was opened Betterton and his company dissolved partnership and put themselves under the management of Vanbrugh and Congreve. But the acoustics of the Haymarket were bad, and the situation worse. Fields, in those days, covered the sites now occupied by Hanover, Grosvenor, and Cavendish Squares. Highwaymen abounded, and a visit to the new theatre was apt to prove an adventure more exciting than pleasant.

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*

² *Roscius Anglicanus*

³ "*La demoiselle Subligny parut peu de temps après la demoiselle Fontaine, et fut aussi fort applaudie pour sa danse; mais elle quitta le théâtre en 1705, et mourut après l'année 1736*" *Histoire de l'Opéra*. She was one of the first of the professional women-dancers

⁴ This lady is stated by the writer of the *Roscius Anglicanus* to have "got by the Stage and Gentry above 10,000 guineas" She was very ugly, wherefore her husband, Dr Pepusch, fondly called her *Hecate*

⁵ Afterwards Sir John Vanbrugh

⁶ This was Anne, second daughter of Marlborough, and wife of the third Earl of Sutherland. She died in 1716.

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The opening opera at the Haymarket, *The Triumph of Love*, only ran three days, and within a few months Congreve, despairing of profits, gave up his share to Sir John, who tried to play what was then considered to be a manager's trump card—a series of plays from the French. But the public obstinately held aloof, and soon a new project came on the *tapis*—the reunion of the two companies.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SECOND REUNION

IN 1707 a public subscription was raised for the purpose of reviving three plays by the best authors. These were Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, Fletcher's *King and no King*, and the comic scenes (arranged by Cibber) from Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode* and the *Maiden Queen*, in which Cibber took the part of Celadon, and an obscure young actress of the name of Oldfield Nell Gwynne's old rôle of Florimel.

This scheme proved profitable to actors and managers alike, and in the same year further efforts were made to unite the two houses. Rich was the chief obstacle. Aware that any show of eagerness on his part would be fatal to a good bargain, he suddenly developed scruples, and held back on the plea that he had to consider the interests of his co-patentees—whom he had never considered in any way before.

One of these, Sir Thomas Skipworth, now assigned his interest to Colonel Brett, but later on instituted a suit in Chancery, alleging that the conveyance had only been made in trust. Whereupon Brett, by that time weary of things theatrical, withdrew altogether from such unprofitable pursuits.

The Haymarket having been made over to Owen Swiney (an ex-manager of Rich's), Christopher made a verbal agreement with him by which Swiney was allowed to take from Drury Lane whatever actors he wanted. Further it was arranged that "after all payments had punctually been made, the profits should be equally divided between the undertakers."

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This clause stank in the nostrils of Rich, and he refused to execute the agreement. Finally, after much chopping and changing, and not without the intervention of the Lord Chamberlain, the two companies were united and gave their first performance on January 15th, 1708. It was *Hamlet*, and the actor who spoke the Prologue took upon himself to embellish Shakespeare with the following gag :

“For us and for our Tragedy
Thus stooping to your Clemency,
[*This being a year of unity,*]
We beg your hearing patiently,”

“at which,” wrote Cibber in his *Apology*, “several grave faces looked a little out of humour.” This gravity may have been an expression of dislike for the Act of Union with Scotland, or it may have been disgust at such impudent tampering with Shakespeare—in which case Cibber who had already perpetrated his own alteration of *King John*, performed once at Drury Lane, in 1703, was in no position to criticise.

He had been away in the country whilst the altercation between Swiney and Rich was in progress, and declared he knew nothing of it until the former wrote to ask him to join his company at the Haymarket. Cibber magnanimously refused to desert Rich. This magnanimity was wisely tempered by a firm insistence on a rise in salary, and Rich was left in no doubt as to his leading man's intentions.

“You know now on what terms I am willing to serve you,” quoth Cibber, looking gravely at the old man.¹

Letters from Sir John Vanbrugh to the Earl of Manchester shed light on the proceedings of the next few months.²

¹ *Apology*

² *Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne*, edited by the Earl of Manchester from the papers at Kimbolton Henry Colburn

The Second Reunion

“London, February 24, 1707/8.

“MY LORD,—I intended to trouble your Lordship
“with a long letter about our opera affairs, but have
“not time to-night, and yet I am engaged by promises
“not to let slip this post. I therefore only acquaint
“your Lordship that at last I got the Duke of Marl-
“borough to put an end to this playhouse faction by
“engaging the queen to exert her authority, by the
“means of which the actors are all put under the Patent
“at Covent Garden house,¹ and the operas are established
“at the Haymarket, to the general liking of the whole
“town, and both go on in a very successful manner and
“without disturbing one another. This settlement
“pleases so well that people are now safer to see operas
“carried to a greater perfection, and in order to it the
“Town cries out for a man and woman of the first rate
“to be got against next winter from Italy. . . . I have,
“therefore, with several to back me, laid before my Lord
“Marlborough the necessity for the queen to be at some
“expense and have such an answer, both from him and
“my Lord Treasurer, as makes me write this letter to
“your Lordship, to acquaint you that if Nicolini and
“Santini will come over (my Lord Halifax telling me
“this morning your Lordship very much desired they
“should) I will venture so far as £1000 between them.
“ . . . This money I propose to give them for singing
“during the next season, which, as things are now
“regulated, begins the 10th September, and ends the
“10th June. . . . The opera is very rarely performed
“above twice a week, and in the beginning and latter
“part of the season not above once, so that their labour
“will not be great. If your Lordship could engage for
“pistoles or Louis-d’ors instead of pounds, it would

¹ A mistake on the part of the transcriber Vanbrugh must have written *Drury Lane* The Covent Garden house was not in existence when he wrote the above letter.

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“be so much saved to two of your humble servants,
“Mr. Bertis and myself, we being now the sole adven-
“turers and undertakers of the opera; for I have
“bought Mr. Swiney quite out, only paying him as
“manager. . . .”

Again on May 11th, 1708, we find Vanbrugh writing to the Earl :

“MY LORD,—I have two letters from your Lordship
“and am (as well as the town) obliged to you for the
“endeavours you used to improve the opera here. . . .

“As for myself, I have parted with my whole concern
“to Mr. Swiney, only reserving my rent, so that he is
“entire possessor of the opera, and most people think
“will manage it better than anybody. He has a good
“deal of money in his pocket, that he got before by the
“acting company; and is willing to venture it upon the
“singers. . . .

“Mr. Swiney has engaged . . . to allow a thousand
“pounds for Nicolini to stay here two winters. . . .

“As for Santini, Mr. Swiney offers the same conditions
“to her, if your Lordship can prevail with her to come;
“or if she won’t, and you think Regiana would do as
“well, he leaves it to your judgment . . .

“’Tis voices are the things at present to be got, and
“if these top ones come over ’twill facilitate bringing
“the queen into a scheme now preparing by my Lord
“Chamberlain and others, to have concerts of music,
“in the summer, at Windsor, twice a week, in the
“apartments. . . . So that I hope, upon the whole,
“your Lordship will be of opinion you may safely
“persuade a couple of ’em to take the voyage; for ’tis
“certain the people of quality will find some means or
“other to send them home in good humour. I must
“give your Lordship one caution, by the way, which is
“that I have good reason to believe that Valentini
“ (though he pretends to wish for Nicolini’s coming) will,

The Second Reunion

“underhand, do all he can to discourage him; for he has linked himself with Mrs. Tofts¹ and, in order to make a good bargain for themselves next winter, will certainly play some trick to hinder both Nicolini and a woman from coming over, if your Lordship don’t apprise ’em on’t. . . .”

Evidently the Earl dropped the necessary hint, for Nicolini arrived safely, and for awhile attracted large audiences to the Haymarket. His greatest success was in Handel’s *Rinaldo*. As Hydaspes, the singer at every performance killed a lion. The first “lion” was a choleric person who overdid his part and would not easily be killed. The second was a tailor who—evidently with an eye to business—ripped up the actor’s tights. The last was a country gentleman who played “lion” for his own amusement, and would not reveal his name. With this worthy Nicolini might have been seen smoking peacefully between the acts.²

Alas for Swiney! The halcyon days of success were only too brief, and within three seasons he was ruined and fled to Italy. Vanbrugh attributed the failure of Opera in England to three causes: “One, that half the season was past before the establishment was made, and then my Lord Chamberlain, upon a supposition that there would be immense gain, obliged us to extravagant allowances. Another thing was, that the town, having the same notion of the profits, would not come into any subscription. And the third was that although the pit and boxes did very near as well as usual, the gallery people, who hitherto only thronged out of curiosity, not taste, were weary of the entertainment. So that, upon the whole, there was barely money to pay the

¹ The English singer, in favour of whom the pittites at Drury Lane had assembled in force to hiss down Signora L’Epine and support native talent

² *The Spectator*

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performers, and other daily charges; and as for the clothes and scenes, they fell upon the undertakers.”¹

Vanbrugh himself had sagaciously left the operatic ship before it sank in these deep waters. In the same letter he wrote: “I lost so much money by the Opera this last winter that I was glad to get quit of it, and yet I do not doubt that operas will thrive and settle in England. . . . Mr. Swiney has now undertaken it himself, and I believe will go through with it very well. . . . And, if once a peace comes, there will be many things to support music which are wanting now. This last stroke² in Flanders I hope will procure one.”

No doubt the indifference of the public contributed to the failure of opera in England. There was so much of a more thrilling nature to distract attention from the stage just then. There was the war in Flanders, for instance, and at home the trial of Sacheverell which widened into a great party struggle between Whigs and Tories. During the trial the Doctor drove daily from his lodgings in the Temple to Westminster, in a glass-fronted coach, through streets crowded with a religious mob clamouring to bless and be blessed by the High Church divine whose crime was the preaching of a dull and silly sermon maintaining the doctrine of non-resistance. On one occasion the rabble gathered round Queen Anne’s chair as she was being carried to the House of Lords and cried: “We hope your Majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell!” They made every man doff his hat to the Doctor, and abused all who refused to reverence the popular idol. On the second night of the trial London was illuminated by bonfires made of the pulpits and pews of demolished Meeting-houses, and both theatres were entirely deserted.

Towards the end of the trial Sacheverell abandoned

¹ Letter to the Earl of Manchester, July 27th, 1708 Published in *Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne.*

² Oudenarde



Owen Sweeney

Painted and engraved by P. van Bleecck

The Second Reunion

his triumphal car and, like Cibber's wig, rode in a humble sedan.

The reunion pleased no one, and on March 31st, 1708, Colonel Brett assigned his share in Drury Lane to Wilks, Estcourt, and Cibber. Rich was still at his old tricks, and his company began to prepare for a secession. They appealed to the Lord Chamberlain, who suspended Rich's patent. He retaliated by issuing the wildest statement (purporting to be a balance-sheet) ever conceived outside a mad accountant's dream of figures gone mad. It was headed: "Advertisement concerning the poor Actors, who, under pretence of hard usage from the Patentees, are about to desert their service;" and even the addition was fantastic!¹

Rich having been effectually silenced by the Lord Chamberlain's allowing his actors to engage themselves elsewhere, a licence was granted in 1709 to Wilks, Doggett, and Cibber, who then went to act at the Haymarket, and Drury Lane was closed. Rich appealed in vain against the silencing order, and in the meantime one of the proprietors, William Collier, a lawyer, M.P. for Truro, applied for and obtained a licence to take over the management and premises of the Theatre Royal. He had to use force to turn Rich out neck and crop, before he could take possession, nor did the old rascal go emptyhanded, for he took with him everything of value, and sold the rest.² He spent the rest of his life in raising funds to rebuild the old theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He did not live to see it completed, and it opened in 1714 under the management of his son John, who afterwards built Covent Garden theatre, in 1733.

¹ For remainder of this document see Appendix A. It will be seen that the addition is incorrect.

² Estcourt, in his dedication of *The Fair Example*, and the anonymous author of the *Stage Beaux tossed in a Blanket*, both eulogised Rich. But as they were writers of plays which he produced or they hoped he would produce, their testimony must be taken *cum grano salis*.

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Having got their licence, Collier's company at Drury Lane opened with Shadwell's *Fair Quaker of Deal*, a piece Cibber had unaccountably advised Rich to refuse when it was offered to him. When Collier found he was not doing so well at Drury Lane as he expected, he persuaded Swiney to exchange with him, and went to the Haymarket. There he "farmed" his authority to Aaron Hill, one of his managers, and tried to get back to Drury Lane, which was doing better without him. By chicanery he forced Swiney to return to the Haymarket, and himself returned to Drury Lane, where he obtained a fresh licence in the names of Wilks, Doggett, Cibber, and himself. But he took no active part in the management, agreeing instead to accept £700 a year in lieu of all claims. The acting managers were the gainers by this arrangement, however, which left them a free hand.

Drury Lane now entered upon a period of prosperity which lasted for twenty years, thanks to the fact that the licence was granted only *during the Queen's pleasure*, which meant that the managers had to do their best not to forfeit this favour.

The name of Mrs. Oldfield had been mentioned among those of the players chosen to go into partnership with Collier, but surly old Doggett objected to having what he called "a petticoat" in the management and suggested that, instead of receiving a fixed share, the actress should be permitted to fix her own terms for an engagement. To this she agreed, and demanded £200 a year and a "clear benefit," which was readily granted.

CHAPTER IX

NANCE OLDFIELD

ANNE OLDFIELD was one of the few exceptions which found Cibber's eye for opportunity on the blind side. In 1612 Vanbrugh had introduced to Christopher Rich a girl he had seen in the house of her aunt, then mistress of the Mitre Tavern in St James's Market and later married to Farquhar the dramatist.

In this girl, the daughter of an ex-vintner, "Captain" Oldfield, Farquhar thought he saw signs of ability when he caught her reading aloud behind the bar from an old copy of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*. He spoke of her to Vanbrugh, with the result that Rich engaged her at a beginner's salary of fifteen shillings a week. Perhaps she was not worth more. It was a long time before she showed any signs of justifying Farquhar's opinion or Vanbrugh's interest. Gildon¹ went so far as to declare that she was "of the meer rubbish that ought to be swept off the stage with the filth and dust," and Cibber persistently ignored her.

In 1703 the company went to Bath, during Queen Anne's residence there, and Nance was cast to play Leonora to Cibber's Sir Courtly Nice.² Though she had already made a slight hit as Alinda in Vanbrugh's adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Pilgrim*, Cibber entertained the gravest doubts as to the young person's ability; which doubts were not dispelled by the "mifty" manner in which she dawdled through rehearsals.

¹ *Comparison between the Two Stages.*

² In John Crowne's play of that name.

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Probably the tactless comedian allowed his doubts to be so apparent that the object of them, a lass of spirit, was annoyed into this exhibition of "miftiness" at rehearsal and wilfully concealed her powers until the first night. Then Cibber received a tremendous shock. As *Leonora* the sulky little actress proved herself a genius, and Cibber was so delighted that he ever afterwards took to himself the credit of her discovery, and at once proceeded to make use of it. He retrieved from his desk the neglected MS. of a comedy he had cast aside in despair of finding an actress fitted to sustain the part of *Lady Betty Modish* when Mrs. Bracegirdle deserted to the rival company at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

Cibber finished *The Careless Husband*, his best work,¹ with an eye on Nance. When the play was produced, good as it was, he admitted that it owed its immediate success chiefly to the fine acting of Mrs. Oldfield, who, as Lady Betty, took the town by storm. It was, thanks to her, too, that another play of his was not damned on the first day. But let Davies tell the story.

"In the comedy, *The Provoked Husband*,² Cibber's enemies tried all in their power to get the play condemned. The reconciliation scene wrought so effectually upon the sensible and generous part of the audience, that the conclusion was generously applauded. Amidst a thousand applauses Mrs. Oldfield came forward to speak the Epilogue, but when she had pronounced the first line—

'Methinks I hear some powdered critic say——'

a man, of no distinguished appearance, from the seat next to the orchestra, saluted her with a hiss. She fixed her

¹ Praising but with faint clamour, Congreve wrote of *The Careless Husband*, "Cibber has produced a play, consisting of fine gentlemen and fine conversation together, which the ridiculous Town for the most part likes, but there are some," he darkly added, "that know better."

² With Vanbrugh.

Nance Oldfield

eye upon him immediately, made a very short pause, and spoke the words *Poor creature!* loud enough to be heard by the audience, with such a look of mingled scorn, pity, and contempt, that the most uncommon applause justified her conduct in this particular, and the poor reptile sunk down with fear and trembling.”¹

Mrs. Oldfield was the original of several other parts in plays written by Cibber, and he wrote very generously of her in his *Apology* in a passage well worth quoting:—

“Had her birth placed her in a higher rank of life, she had certainly appeared in reality what in this play² she only excellently acted, an agreeable, gay woman of quality, a little too conscious of her natural attractions. I have often seen her in private societies, where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of their behaviour, without the least diminution of their sense or dignity. And this very morning, where I am now writing, at the Bath, November 11th, 1738, the same words were said of her by a lady of condition, whose better judgment of her personal merit in that light has emboldened me to repeat them. After her success in this character of higher life, all that nature had given her of the actress seemed to have risen to its full perfection, but the variety of her power could not be known till she was seen in a variety of characters, which, as fast as they fell to her, she equally excelled in. Authors had much more from her performance than they had reason to hope for, from what they had written for her; and none had less than another, but as their genius, in the parts they allotted her, was more or less elevated.

“In the wearing of her person she was particularly fortunate; her figure was always improving to her thirty-sixth year; but her excellence in acting was never at a stand; and the last new character she shone in (Lady Townly)³ was a proof that she was still able to do

¹ *Dramatic Miscellanies*

² *The Careless Husband.*

³ In *The Provoked Husband.*

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more, if more could have been done for *her*. She had one mark of good sense, rarely known in any other of either sex but herself. I have observed several, with promising dispositions, very desirous of instruction at their first setting out; but no sooner had they found their best account in it, than they were as desirous of being left to their own capacity, which they then thought would be disgraced by their seeming to want any farther assistance. But this was not Mrs. Oldfield's way of thinking; for to the last year of her life she never undertook any part she liked, without being importunately desirous of having all the helps in it that another could possibly give her. By knowing so much herself, she found how much more there was of nature yet needful to be known.

"Yet it was a hard matter to give her any hint that she was not able to take or improve. . . . Upon the whole, she was, to the last scene she acted, the delight of her spectators."

Nor was Mrs. Oldfield's success confined to the theatre. The beautiful silvery voice and personal charm which made her a favourite with the public, won for her also the entry into more exclusive circles.

The foppish Cibber had his wig carried on to the stage in a sedan. Nance went one better. She had herself, dressed just as she had appeared at some fashionable party, carried in her chair to the stage door for all the town to see.

So circumspect in public that she had the reputation among her colleagues of being stand-offish, Mrs. Oldfield was not in private a model of virtue. For years she lived with Arthur Mainwaring, the sworn foe of Sacheverell and his supporters, whom he fiercely attacked in his "*Letters to a Friend in North Britan.*" Mainwaring also wrote several plays and epilogues for Mrs. Oldfield, by whom he had one son, and to whom he left almost his entire fortune when he died in 1712.



Mrs Anne Oldfield

Painted by J Richardson, engraved by E Fisher

Nance Oldfield

After Mainwaring's death, society did not reject his quasi-widow, though she now became the mistress of General Charles Churchill, brother of the first Duke of Marlborough. Rumour, busy with the names of the parties to this new alliance, came to the ears of Princess Charlotte at last.

"Madam," said she one evening to the actress at a fashionable rout, "I hear you and the General are married."

Possibly the royal lady intended to follow this up with a blunt intimation that "an 'twere not so, then 'twere well that 'twere so quickly," but Nance was more than equal to the occasion.

"Madam," she retorted, waving her fan and demurely casting down her fine eyes; "so indeed 'tis said. But the General keeps his own secrets!"

Which was no doubt the unsullied truth.

In her declining years Mrs. Oldfield was attacked by a disease which caused her intense suffering; but she refused to retire because her articles expressly stated that she was not to discontinue acting on account of illness. "In the last two months of her illness," Cibber wrote of her,¹ "she declined receiving her salary."

She died on October 30th, 1730, practically in harness, and was buried in the Brussels lace and new kid gloves which Pope so cruelly satirised in his *Moral Essays*.

He never showed more plainly the meanness of his little, tormented soul, than when he wrote, in a flare of spite, the oft-quoted lines on Narcissa which begin:

"Odious! in woollen! 'twould a Saint provoke,"

and end:—

"And—Betty—give this Cheek a little red"

Though, as Wharton somewhat feebly remarked, Pope "had the goodness not to mention names," the couplet

¹ *Apology*.

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was unforgivable, since it was an open secret that it referred to Nance Oldfield, whose dead body, even as the poet wrote his stinging lines, lay in state in the Jerusalem Chamber at Westminster. Certainly the corpse was attired in Brussels lace and new kid gloves, but it is by no means certain that it was at Nance's own request her corpse was thus adorned. There is ample evidence to show that her last hours were too occupied in prayer and pious preparation for the end to leave her any time for whisperings about such feminine gauds. Probably they expressed the last loving service of her faithful companion, Elizabeth Saunders, eager to perform this gentle tendance of the beautiful body so soon to be hid in darkness and in the grave. And why not? Was not, as Leigh Hunt noted, a sprig of myrtle in gold found in a Greek tomb supposed to be that of Aspasia?

The famous Dr. Parker conducted Nance's funeral service, "very willingly, and with much satisfaction," to use his own somewhat ambiguous phrase. Her considerable fortune, with the exception of a few legacies, was left to her two sons by Churchill and Mainwaring, of whom the former afterwards married Mary, natural daughter of Robert Walpole by Maria Skerrett (whom he married in 1738). On her father's elevation to the peerage, George II granted Mary the rank of an Earl's daughter.

CHAPTER X

CIBBER'S DAUGHTER

Just when Cibber's struggle for recognition seemed about to be rewarded with success beyond his hopes, there was born to him (in 1710) a child destined to be his curse.

Of his youngest-born Cibber might have said, as Lear to Regan :

“Thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter,
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh
Which I must needs call mine, thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle
In my corrupted blood”

Perusal of the neglected *Autobiography of Charlotte Charke* affords interesting matter for study to the observer of human nature aware that such eerie mortals as she are constrained, by a natural and perverse predisposition towards vagabondising, to careers more wildly bizarre than the conceptions of an opium-smoker or a Bedlamite.

Charlotte was indeed, as one of her critics very fairly remarked, “a fair type of such weeds as spring spontaneous from the hot-bed of a corrupt civilisation.”

A mental deviation from that standard of that seemliness beloved of the strictly nice marked her from the first. At a very early age she showed her predilection for the pursuits and habits of the masculine character she so frequently assumed on the stage and, later on, in private life. At the age of four she dressed herself in

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a waistcoat, hat, and enormous tie-wig of her father's and, thus arrayed (her tiny form being insufficient to sustain further adornment), paraded before the goggling eyes of certain rustics at Twickenham, fondly hoping they mistook her for her illustrious father.

Another infantile prank called forth a characteristic comment from the caustic Cibber, who, beholding his daughter mounted upon the foal of an ass, pursued by the "dreadful braying of the tender dam," called down from his window :

"Gad demme ! An ass upon an ass !"

The retirement of her invalid mother to Hillingdon gave Charlotte (who accompanied her) further opportunity for the exercise of her peculiar exuberances. Being "as awkward with a needle as a monkey fondling a kitten,"¹ the girl turned her back upon ladylike pursuits and devoted herself to shooting, grooming horses, gardening, and the like. At one time, setting up to be a herbalist, she cured an old dame of interior pains by the administration of a syrup compounded of snails and gooseberry leaves, plus two bottles, stolen from her mother, of hartshorn and sal volatile.

Encouraged by success—the patient actually returned for more—Charlotte determined to set up as a doctor; but her father's rage when he received a big bill for certain drugs, etc., soon cured her of this desire.

Whilst still no more than a child, Charlotte married Richard Charke, leader of the band at Drury Lane.

The marriage proved unhappy, and, after the birth of a child, Charlotte left her husband and went on the stage, where her success was more rapid than her father's had been, and might have proved more lasting but for her ungovernable temper which led her violently and often to quarrel with her manager, Fleetwood.

Among the parts sustained by her were those of

¹ *Autobiography of Charlotte Charke*



*As she is represented in the West of a House in the Dutch at four
 years of age, she tells herself in the first Number of the Narrative
 of her own life, that she was a child of six years of age.*

Charlotte Clarke, aged 100

Engraved by F. Garden

Cibber's Daughter

Aurora, in *The Jovial Crew*; *Macbeath* in *The Beggar's Opera*; *Alicia* in *Jane Shore*; *Fairlove* in *Steele's Tender Husband*; *Lucy* in *The Old Bachelor*; *Millwood* in *George Barnwell*; *Charlotte Welden* in *Oroonoko*; and *Mrs. Tragic* in *The Art of Management*, to which farce Charlotte wrote a Prologue. But after 1737 her name disappeared from the theatrical bills, though by no means from men's mouths.

The lady's career, from this point, became hopelessly variegated. Having quarrelled with her father, who objected to her assumption of his character, Sir Fopling Flutter, and thereafter withdrew his countenance from her in disgust, she set up in business as a grocer and oil-dealer in Long Acre, but failed in this enterprise through her uncommercial generosity to her clients, who only came to buy because she gave overweight of all she sold.

On the death of Charke, Charlotte entered into a partnership which she hints, without exactly affirming, was matrimonial, with a gentleman whom she does not name, whose death left her in extreme poverty.

She then assumed masculine dress on all occasions, and, to support the child she tenderly loved, sold sausages until a marauding cur ruined a promising business by devouring the pork destined for conversion into those delicacies.

By turns Charlotte became valet-de-chambre to an Irish nobleman; drawer at the King's Head Tavern, Marylebone, strolling player, pastrycook and farmer; printer's devil; stroller once more; and finally public-house keeper at Islington—whereas her father had a house in Colebrooke Row. She must have been a sore embarrassment to her family, all of whom (with the exception of Theophilus) refused to acknowledge her. At one time Charlotte's necessities were relieved by a timely gift from Lord Montagu, who heard of her distress through a mutual friend; at another by a gift of 5*s.* from an old lady, a friend of Cibber's.

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Mrs. Charke loves to record in detail her conquests as a "man." In this rôle she once found herself to be the object of the callow affections of an heiress, which caused honest Charlotte to regard her sex as her crowning misfortune, since but for it she might have become master of the lady and of her very considerable fortune. A sense of fairplay in the vagrant soul caused her to reveal herself to the lady who, completely *bouversée*, refused to believe such a confession, and retired to the country in a huff, nor was ever heard of again by her beloved "Mr. Brown."

No lady lightly to be crossed was Charlotte. She once, overhearing a rascal repeat a rumour that she had taken to the road and stopped her own father in Epping Forest, half killed the false prophet with her stout oak cudgel and had to be dragged off him to receive his plea for forgiveness "uttered on his marrow-bones."

She flatly denies that she ever sold fish, or slapped her father's face with the largest flounder in her stock; arguing—not without reason—that had she done so Cibber's rage would not have suffered her to survive.

Whether these rumours grossly malign the lady or not, the fact remains that Cibber would never be reconciled to his daughter, but suffered her to languish in the miserable poverty wherein, two years after himself, she died.

Mrs. Charke's only home for years was a tumble-down hovel near the New River Head, where it was customary for scavengers to deposit the sweepings of the streets. Here, during the last years of her life, her only companions a slovenly servant, a magpie, a monkey and a skeleton dog named Fidele, Charlotte Charke lived as best she could, depending on her pen and the infrequent bounty of the compassionate for the bare necessities of such an unhappy existence. Happily for herself her sanguine temperament always led her to believe her cup of trouble to be too full to contain another drop

Cibber's Daughter

That it could and did, surprised, but never depressed, her.

The comment of a bystander upon her rendering of the part of Hamlet shall serve as epitaph upon this wayward, wasted life. This unknown critic expressed admiration for Mrs. Charke's performance in the rôle of the melancholy Dane, which he declared no man could have bettered, because the actress *so frequently broke out in fresh places*.

A communication made to the *Monthly Magazine* by Mr. Samuel Whyte gives a vivid picture of the condition to which Cibber's vagabond daughter was reduced at the end of her life. Mr. Whyte accompanied a bookseller friend to the abode of the authoress, with a view to making an offer for a novel lately completed by her. The two gentlemen interviewed her in the comfortless hovel above referred to, of which the furniture consisted of a broken chair, a pair of broken bellows used by Mrs. Charke as a writing-desk, and a rough deal board on three legs for the accommodation of such visitors as might stay long enough to sit down. There was a fire, "merely sufficient to remind us of starving," and the MS. of the novel to be discussed reposed upon the bellows-desk. Mrs. Charke demanded thirty guineas for it, but was too inured to disappointment to cavil when she was only offered five—an offer afterwards raised to ten, which she gladly accepted.

There is no subsequent account of how Mrs. Charke supported life through the four years remaining to her after that interview. The most cheerful feature in this final glimpse of a nugatory life is that her surroundings at least were clean, though from other details it is to be inferred that Mrs. Charke's person was not.

Of her last futile effort to be reconciled with her father more will be said in the proper place.

CHAPTER XI

THE TRIUMVIRATE

By the terms of the licence granted on November 6th, 1710, to Swiney, Wilks, Doggett and Cibber, the Drury Lane company was to be silent on Wednesdays, to give the opera at the Haymarket a fair field. But, as we have seen, operas did not attract the town, and when Swiney, ruined, fled abroad to escape his creditors, Collier obtained a fresh licence for himself and the other three. But he continued to take no active part in the management, and as Cibber was more plentifully endowed with bounce than either Wilks or Doggett, he, before the end of the season, became virtually sole manager, as he had for some time been chief judge of plays.

It was a strange triumvirate this at Drury Lane. Cibber himself, vain, jealous, and overbearing, could never have been the most tactful and amiable of colleagues, yet it fell to him to keep the peace not only with, but between his brother managers, whose characters were so antagonistic. Doggett was inclined to parsimony, Wilks to lavishness. That Cibber did somehow contrive to keep friendly with both and so long avoided open rupture between them, proves him to have been a far shrewder man than his enemies gave him credit for being. When the other two disagreed, as they frequently did, over matters of finance, Cibber poured oil on the troubled waters. But it must be admitted that he did not always succeed in calming them.

The first serious trouble arose in 1712, when two Irish

The Triumvirate

actors, Elrington and Griffiths, friends of Wilks, arrived from Dublin and desired to enter the Drury Lane company. Neither Doggett nor Cibber wanted them, but Wilks so contrived matters that they were signed on almost before his fellow-managers knew they had arrived. Doggett stormed, and when the Irishmen were given a Benefit he fairly exploded. Cibber smoothed things over as best he could, and the Benefit proceeded. Wilks then took offence over a small matter of business in connection with the receipts, which he construed into a personal slight. This also was smoothed over, and a sort of armed neutrality prevailed until the following June, when a new licence was issued, which included the name of Barton Booth.

This great actor had, like Cibber, been intended by his parents for the Church, but ran away from home in 1698 to play *Oroonoko* in Dublin. The night of his first appearance was so hot that he wiped his brow, forgetful of the lampblack of his dusky complexion. His streaked countenance diverted the audience, and their laughter horribly disconcerted the actor. Next night, to guard against any repetition of the accident, Booth wore a crape mask, which slipped. Again the audience was diverted. On the third night Booth took no risks. He blacked himself all over so effectually that he had almost to be flayed to get him white again. In 1701 Booth obtained an introduction to Thomas Betterton. In 1704 he married the daughter of Sir William Barkham. When she died, six years later, the widower kept house with Susan Mountford, daughter of the actress so admired by Cibber.¹ Later he married Miss Santlow, the actress who made her name as Dorcas Zeal in Shadwell's play *The Fair Quaker of Deal*, in which Booth took the part of Captain Worthy.

Booth's greatest success was his Cato, in Addison's

¹ See his description of Mrs Mountford's acting on page 119 *et seq.*

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play of that name.¹ After the performance Bolingbroke sent him a purse of fifty guineas collected there and then. It was through Bolingbroke's influence that Booth was promoted to a share in Drury Lane.

'It is such a pleasant change to find Cibber giving ungrudging praise to a brother-actor (though he was usually gallant enough to accord it in generous measure to his sister-actresses) that his appreciation of Booth may be given in full :

"He had a talent at discovering the passions where they lay hid in some celebrated parts by the injudicious practice of other actors; when he had discovered, he soon grew able to express them: and his secret of attaining this great lesson of the theatre was an adaptation of his look to his voice, by which artful imitation of nature, the variations in the sounds of his words gave propriety to every change in his countenance. So it was Mr. Booth's peculiar felicity to be heard and seen the same, whether as the pleased, the grieved, the pitying, the reproachful, or the angry. One would be almost tempted to borrow the aid of a very bold figure and to express this excellence the more significantly, by permission to affirm, that the Blind might have seen him in his voice, and the Deaf have heard him in his visage." ²

Doggett did not share Cibber's admiration for Barton Booth. When the latter was by royal command admitted into the management the surly old man raised an objection and finally walked out of the managers' room, never to return. After the death of Anne in 1714, as Doggett still refused to act though he continued to draw his share, Cibber and Wilks drew up a remonstrance. Doggett replied by filing a bill in Chancery against his co-managers. The case dragged on for two years;

¹ A play which proved profitable to author and managers alike When it was produced at Drury Lane the Triumvirate made a clear profit of £1350 each

² *Apology*

The Triumvirate

then Doggett was given fourteen days in which to decide whether he would return to act or not. He persisted in his refusal, and was granted £600 as his share, with 15 per cent. interest, both parties to pay their own costs.

After this fracas, Doggett cut his late colleagues whenever and wherever he met them.

Cibber's account of how he and the old man finally became reconciled makes an amusing passage in the *Apology*.

"One day, sitting over-against him at the same Coffee-house where we often mixt at the same Table, though we never exchanged a single Syllable, he graciously extended his Hand for a Pinch of my Snuff, as this seemed from him a sort of breaking the Ice of his Temper, I took Courage upon it to break Silence on my Side, and ask'd him how he lik'd it? To which, with a slow Hesitation naturally assisted by the Action of his taking the Snuff, he reply'd—' *Umb!*—the best—*Umb!*—I have tasted a great while!'

"After a few of these coy, Lady-like Complacences on his Side, we grew into a more conversable Temper. At last I took a proper Occasion, and desired he would be so frank with me as to let me know what was his real Dislike or Motive, that made him throw up so good an Income as his Share with us annually brought him in? . . ."

Cibber made a long story of it, but the upshot was that at first Doggett refused to be drawn, though he presently broke into "half sentences and Inuendoes."

"To be always pestered and provoked by a trifling Wasp—a—vain—shallow——! A Man would sooner beg his bread than bear it," grumbled Doggett.

He was careful to name no names, and he might as easily have been understood to refer to Cibber himself by these endearing epithets as to anybody else; but Cibber chose to believe he meant Wilks, in whom at

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the moment the dagger of his own jealousy was firmly sheathed.

Years after, the author of a pamphlet called *The Laureat* severely lashed Cibber for his ill-natured criticisms of Wilks in his *Apology*.

"One might easily conceive," wrote the author, "the foundation of your malice for Wilks—his crime was merit—it is, and was, the opinion of most people, both within and without the doors of the theatre, that he was the corner-stone that supported it—if he sometimes chastised you with his tongue, were not your idleness, your neglect of your business, your tyrannical behaviour to your inferiors, the occasions of his rebuking you?—did you not often hurt theatrical affairs by your avarice and ill-conduct?—did you not by your general misbehaviour towards authors and actors bring odium on your brother managers as well as yourself?—I have been assured, no person who ever had power on the stage was ever so universally odious to the actors as yourself; and these were the reasons which might sometimes provoke Wilks to treat you with the same asperity you used to others—your partiality is so notorious, with relation to Wilks, that everyone sees you never praise him, but to rail at him; and only oil your hone, to wet your rasor."

In calling Wilks avaricious Cibber was both unjust and untruthful. Robert Wilks was one of the most generous of men, who supported not only his own large family and many poor relations, but also the orphan daughters of his friend George Farquhar.

Son of one of the Pursuivants to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Robert was the real fine gentleman of the triumvirate. He had been trained in the office of Secretary Southwell, but his inclination leading him to the stage, he ran away from the office and came to England, where he was engaged by Rich at the usual beggarly salary of fifteen shillings a week, *less ten* "for learning to



Robert Wilks Esq.

Robert Wilks

Painted by J Ellys, engraved by J. Faber, jun

The Triumvirate

dance." At the dancing school Wilks met the lady he subsequently married, Miss Elizabeth Knapton. He then returned to Ireland, on Betterton's advice, and was given £50 a year and an annual benefit at the Dublin Theatre. Rich, realising the mistake he had made through parsimony, sent a special messenger to invite the actor to return, promising him £4 a week. But the Irish so loved Wilks that the Duke of Ormond issued a warrant to prevent his leaving the country.

However, £4 a week in those days was worth running risks for, and Wilks escaped, accompanied by his wife and Farquhar, who had had the misfortune to wound a brother-actor in a stage-fight; which so upset his nerves that he never acted again, but turned playwright instead. It was in his *Constant Couple* that Wilks made his name as Sir Henry Wildair.

On the stage, we are told, Wilks was merry; off it he was sad,¹ and no wonder. He was always in mourning. Eleven of his children died one after the other, and in 1713-14 his wife followed them. He then courted and married Mrs. Mary Fell, a widow.

Wilks died on September 27th, 1732, and was buried in St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden. Cibber acted as one of the pallbearers at the funeral, at which the Gentlemen of the King's Chapel attended and sang an anthem.

In the *Friendly Writer and Register of Truth* on the day of Wilks's death appeared a quaint appreciation of him, written by Ruth Collins, a Quakeress, which ran thus. (The italics are the fair journalist's own)

"Died this day ROBERT WILKS of the *Irish Nation*. He was one that shewed great *Behaviour* of *Body* and spake many *quaint words* of *Vanity* upon a *Stage of Wood*, before *people* who delight in *vain Babbling*, and they are now greatly troubled at his *Loss*. For, say they, *where*

¹ Curll's *Life of Wilks*

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shall we find his fellow, to yield Delight unto our Ears, and unto our Hearts, in the doleful evenings of the Winter? Those that were of his Company also mourn and say, Our Neighbours will rejoice, as hoping to be Gainers by his Departure."

After all, it is not unlikely that Doggett's alleged objection to the inclusion of Booth in the management, rather than any dislike he may have felt for Wilks, *was* his real reason for leaving Drury Lane.

Men took their politics very seriously in those days, and Doggett took his more seriously than most. Booth was a pet of the aristocracy. As many as six "glass-coaches" called at the theatre daily to compete for the privilege of taking him home after the performance. His patron, Bolingbroke, was a high Tory, with Jacobin tendencies. Doggett was a fanatic Whig. To him the Hanoverian Succession was more than a mere law of Nature or even of Divinity—it was the dearest article of his political creed. *Sapienti sat*—as Cibber, who dearly loved a Latin tag, might have said.

CHAPTER XII

THE GENTLE ART OF "CHOAKING SINGING-BIRDS"

CIBBER well deserved the strictures of the author of *The Laureat*, for among his most unpleasant characteristics were his intense jealousy of successful colleagues, and his mercilessness towards aspiring authors; which latter trait in operation the same writer termed "choaking of Singing-Birds."

Colley never seems to have remembered the struggles of his own youth. It is not unnatural that he should have made haste to forget those bitter years of hope deferred; but it is strange to find that in a character on the whole amiable, they left no softness of understanding, no desire to help others under the same circumstances; but only a granite indifference amounting, on occasions, to sheer cruelty.

When Cibber became chief judge of plays at Drury Lane, he adopted a method described by the writer of *The Laureat* with such bitterness that one wonders if he had suffered from it himself, as the author of a rejected play.

"The author of a new piece was instructed to pay his compliments severally to the Managers, who, with much Unwillingness, were prevailed upon to appoint some leisure day for the reading of it when they were all three to be present; Yet this was a Favour not easily to be obtained; for we are to know, when an Author has got thus far, he has made a considerable progress, not one in twenty being able to gain this point, and never, I believe, during their Prosperity, without the recommendation of

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interest or Power. Well, the day being come for reading, the Correcor, in his judicial capacity, and the other two being present; that is, the Court sitting, Chancellor Cibber (for the other two, like M——s in Chancery sat only for Form's sake and did not presume to judge) nodded to the Author to open his Manuscript. The Author begins to read, in which, if he fail to please the Correcor, he wou'd condescend sometimes to read it for him: When, if the Play shook him very warmly, as it wou'd, if he found anything new in it, in which he conceived he could particularly shine as an Actor, he would lay down his Pipe (for the Chancellor always smoaked when he made a Decree) and say, *By God, there is something in this. I do not know but it may do; but I will play such a Part.* Well, when the Reading was finished, he made his proper Corrections, and sometimes without any Propriety; nay, frequently he very much and very hastily maimed what he pretended to mend; but to all this the Author must submit, or he would find his work postponed to another season, or perhaps *sine die*."

Many complaints of Cibber's impertinence to authors found their way into the public prints, and another little scene at the theatre described by Davies in his *Dramatic Miscellanies* bears witness that the writer of *The Laureat* did not, in this particular instance, exaggerate.

A certain author, Davies tells us, had asked Cibber to read a play of his. Knocking at the manager's door, the tyro thrust his roll into Cibber's hands, when that worthy looked out to see who was there. Half grudgingly, Cibber took the manuscript and said he would read it later on. Then he turned over a page or two, read here and there, flicked to the end, shrugged his shoulders and returned the play to its author with the remark: "This will not do at all!"

Cibber then trotted off to Button's, and there, laughing immoderately, related the story to Colonel Brett (whom we have met before). The Colonel frowned and said

The Gentle Art of "Choaking Singing-Birds"

that if the author had resented this treatment by whipping Cibber for a conceited puppy, he had been fully justified.

"Do you pretend, sir," thundered Brett, "by reading two lines in a cursory manner, to judge of the merits of a play?"

Cibber—who had probably read more than two lines, and in his cursory glance had seen quite enough to tell him the play was impossible as a business proposition—said nothing. A slight cast in his eye became apparent, as it always did when he was cornered, and he took snuff. Presently the irate Colonel went away, leaving him to digest many uncomplimentary home-truths at his leisure. But Cibber had his reasons for swallowing Brett's insults thus meekly. One was his friendship with Mrs. Brett, of whose *savoir-faire* he had so high an opinion that he had submitted every scene of *The Careless Husband* to her supervision. Mrs. Brett had even suggested an incident in the play, based on actual experience, so gossip said. She had long suspected an intrigue between her handsome spouse and her maid, and when she found them asleep in two chairs, side by side, she tied her handkerchief round Brett's neck, as a sign that his sweet amour was discovered by her. Cibber used this episode with great effect, turning the handkerchief into a steinkirk, in the scene between Lady Easy, her lord, and Edging the maid.

Rumour, flying batlike everywhere, also declared that Mrs. Brett had first seen the Colonel from her coach, incontinently descended from it, pounced upon, and willy-nilly married him. There was always plenty of gossip about Mrs. Brett, "the repudiated wife," as Horace Walpole noted in his *Reminiscences*, "of the Earl of Macclesfield, the unnatural mother of Savage the poet."¹

¹ The story of Richard Savage's claim to be the son of this lady by Lord Rivers (whose "sons of sorrow" were as numerous as his amours) was made classic by Dr. Johnson, but no document

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Certainly it were wiser for a man who desired to walk circumspectly into society not to quarrel with the Bretts; though as a matter of fact the Colonel had said no more than was justifiable in his criticism of Cibber's method of judging plays, which must often have led his co-managers to curse his name. In other days he had advised Rich to refuse *The Fair Quaker of Deal*, because Shadwell would not allow him to alter it, and in his *Life of Garrick* Davies reveals the interesting fact that Cibber turned down *The Beggar's Opera*.

Of the three managers at Drury Lane Cibber was the least liked. Though he spared no pains to instruct the actors, he could never refrain from flinging sarcastic remarks from time to time. Once, when a younger actor was rehearsing Booth's old rôle of Scandal in *Love for Love*, when he came to the exclamation: "Death and hell! Where is Valentine?" he ventured to remark that Mr. Booth forgot the *death and hell*. Cibber with a sneer retorted: "There was more beauty in his forgetfulness than in all you remember!"¹

Until the year 1740 there was at Drury Lane a little room called the Settle, separated from the stage and the scenc-room by a partition of wainscot. Here, before the great Green Room was built, the actors used to retire between acts, to gossip and joke together. Wilks came

in support of Savage's claim was ever produced, and all the contemporary stories of his birth were inspired by that profoundly tragic character himself. Many of his statements he afterwards contradicted, others have since been proved utterly false. There is no doubt that Mrs. Brett (when Countess of Macclesfield) had a son by Rivers, who died in infancy, but so far was she from being an unnatural mother that at some peril to herself she stayed her headlong flight from the enraged Earl in order to have this hapless babe baptised. Cf. the able articles on Savage by W. Moy Thomas in *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, Vol. VI.

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*.

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among them sometimes, Booth (who had more leisure) more often; neither could come too often, for all loved to see them. Cibber seldom entered the Settle. He knew he was not welcome, and "tyrants fear, as they know they are feared."¹

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies*

CHAPTER XIII

SIR RICHARD STEELE AT DRURY LANE

IN 1714 Queen Anne died and the theatres were closed for six weeks. During their enforced vacation the acting managers determined to break with Collier, whose annual £700 was a drain on their resources. They therefore offered the genial Dicky Steele a share. He was a good friend to both theatres. "How often," wrote Cibber in his *Apology*, "have we known the most excellent audiences drawn together at a day's warning, by the influence of a single Tatler, in a season when our best endeavours without it could not defray the charge of the performance."

The new licence, which was obtained by Steele himself through the Duke of Marlborough, ran as follows :

"GEORGE R.

"WHEREAS Richard Steele, Esqre,¹ Mr Robert Wilks, Mr Colley Cibber, Mr Thomas Doggett ² and Mr Barton Booth are represented to Us by their long experience and other good qualities to be fitly Qualify'd to have the Care and Management of Our Company of Comedians under the direction of the Chamberlain of Our Household, for the time being, We therefore reposing Especial Trust and Confidence in the said Richard Steele, Robert Wilks, Colley Cibber, Thomas Doggett and Barton Booth, do hereby give and grant unto them full Power, Licence, and Authority, to form, constitute and establish

¹ Steele did not receive his knighthood until 1715.

² Who never executed the articles of his agreement.

Sir Richard Steele at Drury Lane

for Us a Company of Comedians with full and free Licence, to act and represent in any convenient Place during our Pleasure and no longer, and in such manner as three or more of them shall think proper, all Comedys, Tragedies, and all other theatrical performances (Musicall Entertainments only excepted) Subject to such Rules and Orders for their good government therein, as they shall from time to time receive from the Chamberlain of Our Household : and we do hereby Revoke and make void all former licences and Powers granted to any Person for that Purpose. Given at Our Court at St James's this Eighteenth day of October 1714 in the First Year of Our Reign.

“ By his Majesty's Command,
“ SHREWSBURY.”¹

This licence subsisting only upon his Majesty's pleasure, Steele advised his colleagues to get it extended, and to that end himself drafted and sent to the King the following Petition :

“ TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT
MAJESTY.

“ The humble Petition of Richard Steele sheweth that the Use of the Theatre has for many years been much perverted to the great Scandal of Religion and Good Government.

“ That it will require much time to remedy so inveterate an Evil, and will expose the Undertakers to much envy and opposition.

“ That an Affair of this Nature cannot be accomplished without a lasting Authority.

“ That your Maj^{ty} has given your Pet^r in conjunction with others a Licence to form and establish a Company of Comedians for the Service of your Maj^{ty}.

“ That your Pet^r did not desire this favour in so ample

¹ Lord Chamberlain's Papers, Record Office

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a manner as your Maj^{ty} was graciously disposed to bestow it upon him, till he had taken a View of the State of the Theatre under your Maj^{ties} Licence, and after mature deliberation thereupon promised himself he should be able to act therein in some degree to your Maj^{ties} Satisfaction.

“That your Pet^r has observed great inconveniences to have arisen from a Grant of this kind, to Men and their Heirs.

“Your Pet^r therefore most humbly prays that your Maj^{ty} would graciously please to grant your Pet^r your Letters Patent for forming a Company of Comedians for the Service of your Maj^{ty} during your Pet^r’s natural life and for three years after his death.”¹

On January 10th, 1715, this petition was referred to the Solicitor-General. On the 12th a compliance was recommended, on the 14th a warrant was issued to prepare a Bill for the Letters Patent, and on the 19th the Patent passed the Great Seal.²

The first care of the new management was to redecorate the theatre. The building being closed for this purpose, rumours were spread to the effect that the building was unsafe, and audiences were much depleted as a result. Sir Thomas Hewett, Surveyor of His Majesty’s Works, inspected the premises and pronounced the structure to be perfectly safe. His report was published, and the nervous public reassured.

¹ Public Record Office

² Lord Chamberlain’s Records

CHAPTER XIV

CIBBER'S SUSPENSION

FOR a time all went well, but all too soon Steele's politics became the leading factor at Drury Lane; and a quarrel ensued between him and the new Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Newcastle.

Although Newcastle had been instrumental in getting Steele nominated as member for Boroughbridge, Sir Richard never seems to have felt he had had fair treatment from that nobleman, as a string of grumbling letters in the British Museum testifies. On May 25th, 1715, writing from St. James's Street, he complained that he had, in the preceding reign, quitted his office of Gazetteer "which was £300 a year, and I was out of it four years, the Stamp Office and a Pension of £100 per an: which makes £400 a year, I was out of three years, and my going into Parliament and being turned out cost me six hundred pounds, which in the whole amounts to £3000."

He therefore considers, he goes on, that he deserves "a good establishment for life. As for my Patent for the Playhouse I shall make it appear next Winter that it was a great Service to the Crown that I accepted it. In one word, my Lord, the purpose of this letter is to lay my dissatisfactions before you and to declare on what foundation I will enter into the lists. I cannot turn so much time that way, and be supported by assistants equal to the Work for less than £1000 a year. And before I enter upon the Argument I hope to receive

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£500, or be excused from so painfull, so anxious, and so unacceptable a service.

“ I am, etc:

“ RICHARD STEELE.”¹

Apparently the Duke took no notice of this complaint, and on July 19th Steele wrote again :

“ St. James’ Street.

“ MY LORD,

“ It was upon your Lordship’s intimation that I should be supported in it, that I have lately appeared in Publick as a Writer; but I find that care of me is not to be taken, except I pass through sollicitations, which will take up more of my time, and quiet of mind than it is worth. I have therefore desired my Lord Townsend to excuse my going on in the affair which I had undertaken, since the part of the ministry is not performed to me.”²

After the Duke became Lord Chamberlain in 1717, he sent for Steele and his co-Patentees, offered them a Licence, and demanded their immediate resignation of the existing Patent. This Steele refused.³ Newcastle then proceeded to make an inquiry into the financial state of Drury Lane, which brought forth a stiff letter from Steele.

“ Nov: 8, 1719.

“ MY LORD,

“ I understand, by Mr. Booth, that your Grace has demanded an Account of the Charge of the Play-house. He, accordingly, will lay before you the grosse Sum of our last year’s Charge. . . .

“ If your Grace desires this only to know what might

¹ Letter in the British Museum, Newcastle MSS.

² Newcastle MSS.

³ See eighth number of *The Theatre*, published by Steele under the name of Sir John Edgar

Cibber's Suspension

be an Equivalent to dispose of me out of the way and put the direction of the theatre into more acceptable hands, I take this occasion to acquaint your Grace that after the Actors who are partners with me in the income, are satisfied, you will have but very little trouble with me, and find that I shall rejoice in an Opportunity of showing with how disinterested a zeal I am

“ My Lord,

“ Your Grace's most obedient

“ Most Devoted

“ Humble Servant,

“ RICHARD STEELE.” ¹

Newcastle replied to this by sending a peremptory order to the company on December 19th, 1719-20 :

“ These are to require you immediately to dismiss Mr. Colley Cibber from acting at the theatre in Drury Lane, and from being anyways concerned in the management of the said Playhouse ; and you, Colley Cibber, one of the Managers and Players at said theatre, are hereby required to cease and forbear acting, or anyways concerning yourself in the Management of the said Theatre, as you shall answer the same contrary at your Peril. Given under my Hand and Seal, etc. etc.

“ HOLLES NEWCASTLE.” ²

On January 28th, 1719-20, Steele's Licence was revoked by an order from the King, and the *Journal* of the 30th announced : “ On Saturday, after the actors at the Playhouse in Drury Lane had performed *The Maid's Tragedy*, a Proclamation was made from the Stage from the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Chamberlain, saying that it was His Majesty's pleasure to suspend for the present more acting at that House.”

¹ Newcastle MSS.

² Lord Chamberlain's Records.

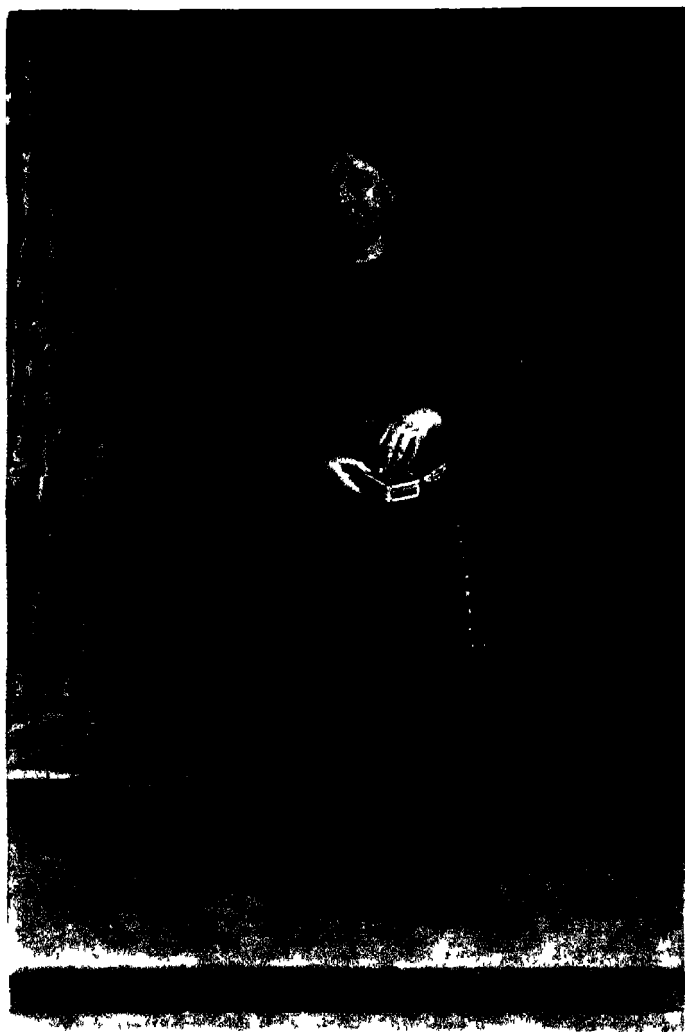
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Two days later a fresh licence was granted to Wilks, Booth and Cibber, "during the King's pleasure," and on March 5th there appeared in the *Journal* a notice to the effect that "yesterday morning the King's Company of Comedians, belonging to the Playhouse in Drury Lane, were sworn at the Lord Chamberlain's office in Whitehall, pursuant to an Order (occasioned by their acting) in obedience to his Majesty's Licence, lately granted, exclusive of a patent formerly obtained by Sir Richard Steele, Knight—the tenor of the oath was, that as his Majesty's Servants, they should act subservient to the Lord Chamberlain, Vice-Chamberlain, and Gentleman-Usher-in-Waiting."

The new licence shows that in this quarrel Cibber was no more than a stalking-horse. His nominal offence was that he "had insolently and traitorously abused the ministry and the King himself," in the dedication to his *Ximena*. But his real offence, hidden in the well where Truth lurks, was that when Elrington¹ asked for the part of Torismond in *The Spanish Friar*, Cibber refused to give it to him. Elrington appealed to the Lord Chamberlain, who sent for Cibber and demanded why he would not give that part to that particular actor. Cibber replied with some spirit that in his own sphere of the theatre he knew better than the Lord Chamberlain or any other outsider what parts were best suited to which actors. This reply was considered insolent, and no doubt Cibber made it appear more so by his manner; hence his suspension.

Meanwhile, putting aside Steele's grumbling letters to Newcastle, the fact that in regard to the Peerage Bill he had written not with regard to party-interest, but according to the dictates of his conscience, other causes had been at work in the mind of Newcastle. John Dennis, the mad critic, had been doing his best for some time to stir up strife at Drury Lane, where he

¹ See *antea*, p. 91



Anthony Leigh in Dryden's "The Spanish Friar"

Painted by G Kneller, engraved by John Smith

Cibber's Suspension

considered he had been badly treated in the matter of his play, *The Fatal Resentment*, having been acted three times only, on the score that it was not worth the managers' while "to act any piece which would not bring them £100."¹ This drove honest John a little madder than he already was, and how to be revenged upon the management at Drury Lane became an obsession of his, until at last he found a way.

In a ten-page dedication of his play to the Duke of Newcastle, Dennis bitterly complained of "two or three insolent actors who had no capacity, education, nor the least concern for their country." He did not complain that he was ill-used, but he did very earnestly desire the Duke to interfere in the management of the theatre "in the same arbitrary manner in which his predecessors in office had done."

This fired the Duke to action.

After the order of silence had been enforced, poor Steele wrote feverishly to all the great men he knew (including Pelham, Newcastle's brother), windily reiterating his intention to appeal to the "Justice of the Nation" if the Lord Chamberlain would not forgo his rancour. To Newcastle himself he wrote :

"MY LORD,

"Your Grace has obliged me this evening with an opportunity which I have long wish'd for, of showing you how devoted I am to your service; but I wish for your Grace's own sake, rather than my own, that you had given me any other occasion for manifesting this unreserv'd inclination for your Person and Character than that of bearing Oppression from you.

"Your Grace's Order has as many exceptions against it as so many words can carry.

"Your Grace, in this instance, invades my Estate as a Parliament man, but this honour I owe to you, and

¹ Genest.

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consider, if it had not been for that great Generosity, I had not either provok'd or been liable to this your great Cruelty.

"I leave it to your Grace's own reflection how consistent it is with bestowing such a Bounty to hurt me for my conscientious behaviour in the use of it. Mr. Cibber is a Principall Actor, and many Familys (as well as my property) are concerned in his Appearance on the Stage. I hope your Grace, in the determination of this proceeding, will give way to your own Temper, which I know to be diverted from its naturall Bent when you offer an Injury.

"You have Greatnesses, Honour, and high station to support and act in, my part is (what I know from long habitude I am capable of) to preserve resolution to struggle with Ill-Usage in a glorious Cause.

"I am,

"My Lord,

"Your Grace's most obedient

"Most humble Servant,

"RICHARD STEELE." ¹

This letter was followed by a tiny, shakily written note, unsigned and undated, but in Steele's hand.

"MY LORD,

"You have injured a man that cannot bear it longer, and you may depend upon it that when you meet conveniently the dispute between you will soon be at an end." ²

The Duke's reply was a stern order to Steele never to write or speak to him again; and Steele appealed to the King, but without avail.

Cibber's suspension was only a matter of weeks, but it was not until his friend Walpole was appointed Chan-

¹ Newcastle MSS

² *Ibid.*

Cibber's Suspension

cellor of the Exchequer that Steele was righted. In his *Diary* (April 9th, 1721) Steele wrote, referring to Newcastle's action in 1719-20: "This Violation of Property I take to have been instigated by the late Secretaries Stanhope and Craggs for my Opposition to the Peerage Bill by Speeches in the House and Printed Pamphlets."¹

On May 2nd, 1721, the *Daily Post* announced: "We hear Sir Richard Steele is restored to his place of Comptroller of Drury Lane."

On the same day a warrant was issued by which the managers were required to account to Steele for his share of the profits.

He never, however, attended to his duties as by the articles of his agreement he was obliged to do; and at last his long-suffering colleagues were driven to inform him that if he did not do his share of the work, they should pay themselves a salary of £1 13s. 4d. a day for doing it in his stead. Steele, in his happy-go-lucky fashion, agreed to this, but later on, when he got into further financial difficulties and his affairs were entrusted to his lawyers, those astute gentlemen brought an action in Chancery against the managers. The case was heard before Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls; and judgment went against Steele, thanks to an able speech by Cibber, reproduced *in extenso* in his *Apology*. This speech was made on the advice of his counsel, who pointed out that Cibber could speak better on the question of the business of a theatrical manager than any lawyer. It lasted an hour, and Cibber suffered severely from "stage-fright" before he began.

But there was no need for these painful tremors. Colley's speech was so good that a writer in the *St. James's Evening Post* of February 17th, 1728, did not think it could have been his, and ascribed it to Wilks! In the next issue the *Post* apologised, and the error was corrected.

¹ Aitken's *Life of Steele*.

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Judgment having been given against Steele, both parties paid their own costs, and "thought it to their mutual interest to let this be the last of their suits." ¹

Genest considered it "very remarkable that Cibber should not say a syllable about this business, tho' he was so particularly concerned in it. As he professed to publish an Apology for his life, and to write a history of the stage while he was on it, it was shabby in him to sink so important a transaction. Did he think his own conduct wrong, or was he afraid to speak out? The only thing which can be said in vindication of Cibber's silence is by supposing that the Duke of Newcastle was instrumental in getting Cibber appointed Poet Laureate—which might probably be the case." ²

As a matter of fact Cibber received the Laureateship through Walpole's influence, and with all deference to Genest, it seems reasonable to suppose that the whole affair between Steele and Newcastle was even more mysterious to him than to posterity, since he was entirely ignorant of the various forces at work behind the scenes. As to his silence *re* his own suspension, that is merely another example of the masterly silence he always maintained on subjects wherein he had not shone.

Apropos of Cibber's suspension Davies has an amusing anecdote. ³

Booth and Wilks were discussing the affair in the presence of King, the box-keeper, when that functionary gravely asked if he could help by "going bail for Mr. Cibber." Both actors laughed.

"Why, you blockhead!" cried Robert Wilks. "It's for £10,000!"

To which King, still grave, retorted that he would be very sorry for himself if he could not be answerable for twice that sum.

¹ *Apology.*

² *History of the Stage.*

³ *Dramatic Miscellanes.*

Cibber's Suspension

Wilks and Booth stared, first at King, then at one another, thinking of their own meagre salaries.

"Bob," quoth Booth at last, with deep emotion, "what have you and I been doing all this time? A box-keeper could buy us both!"

CHAPTER XV

PANTOMIMES

THE year of the South Sea Bubble was as disastrous for the theatres as for speculators. It is hardly likely that so inveterate a gambler as Cibber remained unaffected by the blowing and ultimate bursting of that many-coloured dream of wealth in 1720, though he says nothing of it in his *Apology*¹ But we know that on paper, as in real life, it was his habit to remain silent when a subject distasteful to his pride was on the *tapis*.

Whether Cibber was personally affected or not, the affairs of the theatre were. They were in so parlous a state, indeed, that something drastic had to be done not only to amuse, but also to attract audiences.

At the rival house in Lincoln's Inn John Rich, son of Christopher, had been reduced to all manner of "new-fangled fopperies" to buoy up his sinking fortunes. This eccentric and illiterate individual was so devoid of education that his excursions from legitimate drama into pantomime were less the result of bad taste than of no taste at all. He had, like his father, no artistic conscience. It seemed proper to him to devise a huge stage-Egg, out of which he was hatched in the character of Harlequin; and because he dared not expose his own ignorance by speech, he created that silent character always associated with harlequinades.²

Rich was judged by Georgian "highbrows" (much

¹ He gives it a cursory reference in *The Refusal*, published and produced in the following year

² Bell's *British Theatre*

Pantomimes

on the same grounds as a modern composer has lately fallen foul of Gilbert and Sullivan for "degrading opera to the level of an afternoon's entertainment") to have degraded the stage by his exhibitions. But he was only returning to the Elizabethan tradition, when masques, assisted by gorgeous scenery and mechanical effects, were eagerly attended. In the old masques it was no novelty for Peace to break out of a little cloud upon the stage, while from another cloud issued Law, and from a third burst Justice. Shirley's *Masque of Peace* ended in a kind of general fog, out of which rose a cloud wherein sat Dawn—a comely maid attired in dark blue jerkin, with silver spangles, and white buskins trimmed with gold.

In the eighteenth century pantomimes were a trump card at either theatre. In 1723-24 the managers of Drury Lane, in rivalry with Rich, produced a pantomime by a dancing-master named Thurmond. This was called *Harlequin Dr Faustus*, and was performed on a far more elaborate scale than anything so far attempted by Rich. Naturally this spurred him to fresh efforts, and in December of the same year he brought out his *Necromancer*, surpassing everything yet seen. In the prologue occurred the significant lines:

"Yon rival theatre, by success made great
Turn'd our own arms upon us—and woe be to us!—
They needs must raise the Devil to undo us . . ."

Pope in the *Dunciad* denounced Rich thus:

"Immortal Rich! how calm he sits at ease,
'Mid snows of paper, and fierce hail of pease,
And proud his Mistress'¹ orders to perform
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm"

Rich had no consideration for the dignity of the stage, and did not scruple to litter it with absurdities, or to

¹ I.e. the Goddess of Dulness.

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supplement poor acting with wild-beast shows, acrobatic performances, and rope-dancers. In fact he thought these things ranked high above acting, and when George Anne Bellamy as Juliet to Garrick's Romeo made a great hit in that part, Rich said it was not her acting which had pleased, but his arrangement of the funeral procession.¹

But even Rich was not the "onlie begetter" of the sort of performance which so offended the highbrows of his day. That doubtful honour belongs to Theobald, the first hero of the *Dunciad*, in whose *Rape of Proserpine*

" Hell rises, Heaven descends, and dance on Earth
Gods, imps, and monsters, music, rage, and mirth,
A fire, a jig, a battle, and a ball,
Till one wide conflagration swallows all " ²

Nor was Cibber innocent in this respect, though, when attacked by Pope for introducing pantomimes at Drury Lane, he most emphatically denied that he ever used mechanical devices. Yet when his *Cæsar in Egypt* was produced at Drury Lane, the pasteboard swans pulled by stage carpenters along the scenic Nile excited as much mirth as did "the quavering tragedy tones" ³ of the author in the title-rôle. Pope did not allow the world to forget those swans. In his paper on the *Poet Laureate* he had a fling at them. He suggested that there should be, as in olden days, a public entry of the newly appointed Laureate, who might "with great propriety and beauty, ride on a dragon if he goes by land, or if he chooses the water, upon one of his own swans from *Cæsar of Egypt*."

Cibber also denied indignantly that he ever appeared with Booth on the backs of dragons, or shot up and down trap doors in the approved manner of the pantomime imp. But Pope persisted in saying he did both.

¹ Baker's *History of the Stage*

² *Dunciad*, Bk III

³ Benjamin Victor's *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*

Pantomimes

“ But lo ! to dark encounter in mid-air
New Wizards rise I see my Cibber there !
Booth in his cloudy tabernacle shrin’d,
On grinning dragons thou shalt mount the wind.”¹

But Cibber had to admit that he was a party to the degradation of the stage in permitting pantomimes at Drury Lane. He defended himself on the ground that he had to comply with the vulgar taste exhibited by the public for such things, or starve, when Rich, at the rival house after resorting to the old device of plays from the French acted by specially imported French actors, and operas in which live birds not only sang, but flew about the house and even into the candles,² fell back on his harlequinades which drew thousands from Drury Lane to Lincoln’s Inn. *The Spectator* gravely asserted that there was at one time a design to cast the play of *Dick Whittington* ; but Rich had been forced to draw the line there because the quantities of mice which would have been necessary would thereafter have infested the house, to the terror of ladies in the audience ! Rich stopped at little to outdo his rivals at Drury Lane, and they had to defend themselves by (to quote an absurd phrase of Cibber’s in another connection) “ outdoing their own outdoings ” to keep ahead of him. Booth, according to Theophilus Cibber, did not think there was any harm in Pantomimes, though much in an empty house ; and as the Entertainment (as the Pantomime was called) came at the end of the play, no one was obliged to witness it who did not approve. But what people did object to was the advance in prices which took place when Pantomimes followed the Play. The

¹ *Dunciad* In reply to this Cibber wrote : “ If you figuratively mean by this that I was an encourager of these policies, you are mistaken, for it is not true, if you intend it literally, that I was dunce enough to mount a machine, there is as little truth in that too.” —Letter to Pope.

² Which they beat out with their wings, during the flute symphony in *Rinaldo*

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ordinary prices were: Boxes 4s., Pit 2s. 6d., First Gallery 1s. 6d., Upper Gallery 1s. [Genest.] By putting on a Pantomime and advancing prices the management doubled their weekly turnover. To silence objectors a note was inserted in the Bills, to the effect that "Advance Money will be returned to those who choose to go out before the Overture to the Entertainment." In spite of this concession there was a riot at Drury Lane on November 19th, 1744, when much damage was done, and Fleetwood (the manager) had to seek the protection of the law.

In 1731 John Rich set on foot a subscription to erect a new theatre in Bow Street, Covent Garden; and a year later vacated the old house in Lincoln's Inn, which was last used as a theatre in 1742-3, when Giffard for a short time reopened it. It was afterwards used as barracks, auction-room, warehouse, and finally pulled down to make room for the enlargement of the Hunterian Museum.

The new theatre at Covent Garden was very small, but most lavishly decorated. It opened on December 7th, 1732-3 with Congreve's *Way of the World*.

It was at Covent Garden that Peg Woffington came into her own, under Rich's auspices;¹ and she must have a chapter to herself.

¹ Augustin Daly's *Peg Woffington*

CHAPTER XVI

“ AN IMPUDENT, IRISH-FACED GIRL ”

MARGARET WOFFINGTON, whose real name by the way was Murphy, was the daughter of a journeyman bricklayer and a washerwoman. The lovely Peg, barefooted and bareheaded, used as a child to sell lettuces in College Street, Dublin, where she was one day seen by the famous Madame Violante, the rope-dancer, who was on the look-out for recruits for her band of child-actors about to play *The Beggar's Opera* in her booth. Peg took the part of Polly Peachum, and remained under Madame's management for some time, acting small parts, singing ballads, and dancing jigs. She then went under Elrington's management at the Aungier Street playhouse. Her first speaking-part was Ophelia, in 1737. Her next important part was Phillis in Steele's *Conscious Lovers*. She then fell in love with a man named Taafe, son of a needy Irish peer, with whom she came to London. Taafe deserted poor Peggy after a few months of bliss. The story goes that, hearing her swain was pursuing a lady of more solid attractions—an heiress, in short—Peggy assumed male attire and everywhere the heiress went, 'Adair' (as Peggy called herself) was sure to go. At last 'Adair' got an introduction to the lady at a public ridotto in Vauxhall, and, after some trivial conversation, brought the talk round to Taafe. Peggy then revealed the story of his liaison with an Irish actress. She drew from her pocket his letters. In face of such evidence what could the second deluded fair one do but weep on the neck of the first and swear to dismiss the faithless swain? Peggy crept home triumphant.¹

¹ As a result, Taafe was turned out of White's, and went to Paris, where he was later on arrested in company with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's son for "robbing a Jew"—Trowbridge

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She was not of those who sit and weep, however, so she went to see John Rich, who was then living in the fashionable Bloomsbury quarter. She had to call again eighteen times before she was admitted. Then she was shown into a room where the manager lounged on a sofa, a cup of tea in his hand and twenty-seven cats sitting round him. Peggy stared at Rich and the cats, and Rich stared at her. The cats, intent on the milk-jug, stared at that.

It would be hard to say which of the two humans in the room was the more surprised. Rich himself was so amazed at the lovely apparition in his doorway that he afterwards told a friend it was a fortunate thing for his wife he was not susceptible to the charms of "such an amalgamated Calypso, Circe, and Armida."¹

Rich had heard of Peggy and was willing to engage her at £9 a week. Her first appearance in London was as Sylvia in Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer*, in 1740. The Prince and Princess of Wales were present, and the new actress won golden opinions. Later she appeared by request as Sir Harry Wildair, a character which remained one of her favourites. There is a story that, in after years, when her favours had been, according to rumour, far too freely distributed among her masculine friends, she cried delightedly, as she came off the stage after her performance as Sir Harry: "I protest, half the town believes I really am a man!"

To which a crotchety cynic replied sourly:

"And the other half, Madam, must have had infallible proof that you are not!"

Mrs. Woffington's acting soon became the talk of the coffee-houses from St. Paul's to St. James's. As Conway wrote to Horace Walpole in her first season, "all the town is in love with her," though he added, knowing that Horace thought her a bad actress (probably out of a perverse desire to be different from every-

¹ Trowbridge's *Daughters of Eve*.



Mrs Margaret Woffington

Painted by H. Pickering, engraved by J. Faber, jun

"An Impudent, Irish-faced Girl"

body else), "I think she is an impudent, Irish-faced girl!"

Throughout her brief, bright career, Mrs. Woffington kept her place in the affections of her public, and in those of not a few very important folk indeed. One of her admirers was Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, wit, satirist, poet, friend of Fox, Walpole, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (who said of him "he might be happy if he added to his natural and acquired endowments a dash of morality")

In 1741, owing to a dispute over money with Rich, Peggy went to Drury Lane, where Cibber became as nearly infatuated as it was possible for him to be. At about the same time, David Garrick made his first appearance at Goodman's Fields,¹ and at the end of the season Duval, manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, engaged both Garrick and Mrs. Woffington as counter-attractions to Mrs. Theophilus Cibber and Quin at the Theatre Royal. Dublin went mad over David and Peggy. They, for their part, went equally mad over each other, and, on their return to London in 1742, set up housekeeping together. This was a mistake, for Garrick, in addition to being extremely parsimonious, was very jealous, whereas Peggy, with true Irish hospitality, loved to have her friends about her and to entertain them lavishly. One day, in company, Garrick grumbled that the tea was much too strong. Mrs. Woffington placidly told him she had put in no more than the usual quantity.

"But I say it is too strong, Madam!" snapped Garrick. "Why, look, it is red—*as red as blood!*"²

Of all Peggy's friends, Garrick was most jealous of Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, perhaps with reason. He once asked Peggy when she last saw him.

¹ Opened in 1729 by Odell, who, having no experience, made Giffard his manager

² Trowbridge

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"Oh, not for an age!" she retorted lightly.

"Nay," said he, "but I do know you saw him this morning. . . ."

"Indeed now," quoth Peggy, "and that's true for you. But I count time by *your* absence. I have not seen you since morning—is not that an age?"¹

The lady had evidently not omitted to kiss the Blarney Stone before she left her native land. As an anonymous critic put it, "she first steals your heart, and then laughs at you."

The connection between Mrs Woffington and Garrick did not last long. They really had little in common. She was ardent and impetuous, and he was cold, careful, and economical almost to miserliness. He did go so far as to buy a wedding-ring, but in the end he refused to marry her—and she refused to go on living with him unmarried, so there was nothing to do save part, which they seem to have done without venom, though the parsimonious Garrick did refuse to return a pair of diamond shoe-buckles the lady had given him.

In 1747, when Garrick became co-patentee with Lacy at Drury Lane, where Peggy was under contract to appear, both were embarrassed. The moment she was free to do so the actress withdrew her services, made up her quarrel with Rich, and returned to Covent Garden. She was now living at Teddington, where her sister Polly came to keep her company. Polly afterwards married Captain Cholmondeley, son of the Earl of Cholmondeley. When that impecunious nobleman went to remonstrate with Mrs. Woffington, she told him spiritedly that it was for *her* to object to the match, since it meant that whereas she had previously had "only one beggar to support," she would now have *two*!

In 1751 Mrs Woffington was again in Dublin, where she acted the part of Lady Townly in Vanbrugh and Cibber's *Provoked Husband*. Thomas Sheridan, father of

¹ Molloy

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Richard Brinsley Sheridan, had engaged her for the season at £400, and she brought £4000 to the theatre in ten performances.

Had Mrs. Woffington not allowed herself to be elected President of the Beefsteak Club founded by Sheridan, she might have ended her days in Dublin peacefully. But politics and beefsteaks were inextricably mixed at the weekly dinners when, it was rumoured, toasts were drunk to the Government which, needless to say, was unpopular with the Irish people. A young man from Galway, named Kelly, instigated a riot at the theatre, and Peggy and Sheridan were denounced as traitors to Ireland. Kelly was fined £500, but Sheridan sued for and obtained release of the prisoner and remission of his fine. But it was no longer safe for Peggy to act in Dublin, so she and Sheridan returned to London, where the actress received a tremendous ovation at Covent Garden on October 22nd, 1754.

In the same year died Owen Swiney, long Mrs. Woffington's friend and admirer. He left her £200 a year on condition that she renounced the Roman Catholic faith; which she, having no use for any set form of religious belief, though much for a fixed income, obligingly did.

A story current in those days made Peg, Swiney, and Cibber the chief figures in a little piece of by-play one day. The anecdote was printed in a pamphlet¹ against Cibber and ran thus: “No longer ago than when the Bedford Coffee-house was in vogue, and Mr Cibber was writing an Apology for his Life² there was one Mr. S——, an old acquaintance of Mr Cibber. . . . There was also a fair smirking Damsel, whose name was Susannah-Maria *** who happened to have Charms sufficient to revive the decay'd Vigour of these two friends.” The story goes on to tell how a certain nobleman, seeing the lady and her ancients go by,

¹ *A Blast Upon Bayes*

² In 1738.

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remarked: "Lo, yonder goes Susannah and the two Elders." For some reason, the Susannah of the story was—even by the careful Genest—taken to refer to Mrs Woffington. But as she had not yet appeared on the London stage when Cibber was writing his *Apology*, and as the story does not expressly state that the heroine was an actress, there is no reason to suppose she was Mrs. Woffington—much as Cibber and Swiney admired that lady. Nor, argues Mr. Lowe, editor of the 1889 edition of the *Apology*, could it have been Mrs. Theophilus Cibber (though her name undoubtedly was Susannah-Maria), since Cibber was not likely to have run after his own daughter-in-law. It was not, however, outside the bounds of possibility that he could have done so, if for no other reason than that he was interested in the triumphs of one who had been his pupil, whilst the mysterious third who, in the story, lurks under the letter S, might have been Sloper, who was even then paying court to Susannah and whose association with her was in time to become almost hallowed by familiarity, even in the eyes of the lady's ex-father-in-law! But let us leave these thistles to be cropped by the wilder asses who delight in such prickly provender, and return to Mrs Woffington.

On the night of May 17th, 1757, the actress had a seizure actually on the stage when she was acting *Rosalind in As You Like It*. Though far from well, she had insisted on playing, and all went smoothly until the Epilogue, when, at the words "I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me——" her voice faltered, and with a wild cry of "My God!—my God!" she staggered off the stage and fell into the arms of an attendant in the wings. The audience sat stupefied, and then burst into loud applause. But they had seen their favourite for the last time.

She lingered nearly three years, living at Teddington,



W. Hayley del. J. Faber sculp. Mrs. Margaret Woffington as Mrs. Ford in "The Merry Wives of Windsor"

*Mrs. Margaret Woffington as Mrs. Ford in
"The Merry Wives of Windsor"*

Painted by E. Hayley, engraved by J. Faber, jun.

"An Impudent, Irish-faced Girl"

where she spent her days in doing good to the poor about her. Always a most kind-hearted woman, she had all her life been noted for her generosity. It was she who, when the lovely but poverty-stricken Gummings sisters were presented to the Lord-Lieutenant at Dublin Castle, lent them clothes to wear on that occasion. In the zenith of her fame she would go every day into Clare Market and give money to the basket-women there, of whom it seems possible that Cibber's daughter, Charlotte Charke, was one. Certainly she received charity from golden-hearted Mrs. Woffington at some period of her career, and remembered it when she so gratefully recorded in her *Autobiography*. "Mrs Woffington stands in the ranks of those whose merit must be sounded in the song of grateful praise."

Paralysed and scarcely recognisable, the afflicted actress lived in retirement at Teddington with her life-long friend Mrs. Barrington, who had acted Macheath to her Polly in the old Dublin booth of Madame Violante.

But even while in her quiet retreat she waited for Death, the tongue of scandal was busy with Peggy's name. In one of his letters to Sir Horace Mann, under date November 20th, 1757, Walpole wrote. "Somebody asked me at the play what was become of Mrs Woffington. I replied, she is taken off by Colonel Cæsar. Lord Tyrawley said, 'I suppose she was reduced to *aut Cæsar aut Nullus*!'"

Walpole thought this a neat jest, but it was a very spiteful one, unworthy even of the "fine" gentleman who uttered it. Colonel Cæsar of the Guards had been one of Peggy's most ardent admirers, and he followed her into retreat hoping, perhaps, to inherit her fortune. Rumour was kind enough to say they were actually married. That they never were was proved by Mrs. Woffington's free disposal of her money—a thing not permitted to married women in those unenlightened days.

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She left it all to her sister, Mrs. Cholmondeley, not a penny to Cæsar¹

Peggy died on March 28th, 1760, at a house in Queen's Square, Westminster, where she was temporarily staying² Her body, by her own desire, was carried back to Teddington and buried in the churchyard there The exact spot is unknown, but a tablet in the chancel records that "*near this spot* lies," etc , etc In the same grave was buried the actress's infant nephew, Horace Cholmondeley

¹ A Daly's *Peg Woffington*

² *Ibid*

CHAPTER XVII

THE NONJUROR

THE first task of the Hanoverian ministry had been to quell a desperate attempt of the Jacobites to put James Stuart on the throne of England. There had been no real hope of success, for the active Jacobites in England were few, and the death of Louis had ended all hope of French aid. Then came the bitter failure at Sheriffmuir on November 13th, 1715, which drove James over the sea again, and the clans back to their hills. The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and the arrest of their leader, Sir William Wyndham, further cowed the Jacobites. But popular feeling against them continued to run high, and in 1717 Cibber the opportunist "borrowed the *Tartuffe* of Molière and turned him into a Nonjuror," to expose Jacobitism.

This play, which was dedicated to the King, won for its author many fresh enemies and not a few powerful friends, when it was produced at Drury Lane on December 6th, 1717, with Cibber as Dr. Wolf, Booth as Colonel Woodville, and Mrs. Oldfield as Maria. It ran for eighteen consecutive days. George I. rewarded Cibber with £200 collected then and there in the theatre, and the pamphleteers hurried home to dip their pens in vials of sulphuric acid. One of them altered Thomas Brown's lines on Tom D'Urfey to fit Cibber, thus :

"Thou Cur, half Dane, half English Breed,
Thou Mongrel of Parnassus,
To think lewd lines grown up to Seed
Can ever tamely pass us

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“Thou write Nonjurors, and be damned !
Write Anagrams for Cutlers,
None with thy Frillery will be shamm’d
But Chambermaids and Butlers

“In t’other World expect dry Blows,
No tears can wash Thy Stains out,
Molière will pull thee by the nose,
And Shakespeare dash thy Brains out ! ”

This same disgruntled critic called *The Nonjuror* “a piece of Plagiarism . . . as abhorrent of Reason and right application, as of Truth and Humanity,” and declared that Cibber only wrote it “for Gain and Sycophancy”, concluding with these remarkable words : “To bring the *Church* into the *Playhouse*, is the way to bring the *Playhouse* into the *Church*. ’Tis to turn Religion into *Romance*, and make unthinking People conclude, that all serious Matters are nothing but *Farce, Fiction, and Design* ”

Cibber, airy and philosophical, welcomed the flood of adverse criticism, which, as a matter of fact, he enjoyed. He had once reproved his son Theophilus for grumbling at a piece of ill-natured criticism, and pointed out it were better, did the papers cease to snarl, to insert a stinging paragraph against oneself, to keep public interest alive. Cibber would have made a splendid modern publicity agent !

Under the pseudonym of Barnavelte Pope wrote a pamphlet to prove that *The Nonjuror* was a subtle libel against the Government. But Cibber was incapable of subtlety—he was too shallow-minded. First and foremost his play was written with an eye to the main chance, though Davies insisted it was written “to justify the doctrines inculcated by the Revolution and to open the eyes of the prejudiced in favour of the House of Hanover”¹

A violent anti-Catholic, Cibber had seized the oppor-

¹ *Dramatic Miscellanies*

The Nonjuror

tunity in his play to "transform the odium of imposture from the non-juring clergyman to the Popish priest."¹ This was not propaganda, but predilection. Cibber had an unreasoning hatred, born of his Lutheran upbringing and intensified by his political bias, for the Church of Rome, and admitted that one of his reasons for tampering with Shakespeare's *King John* was his desire to "show up" Catholics in the person of Pandulph; which part he was careful to take himself the better to drive home his point.

His own religion was a mystery. One of his enemies in a more than usually venomous pamphlet accused him of impiety and atheism.

"He has," declared the writer of this pamphlet² (which was primarily an attack on Steele, but contained many gibes at his "Viceroy" Cibber), "a thousand times denied the very Being of a God; he has made his brags and his boasts of that senseless Infidelity. . . It is credibly reported that he spat on the Face of our Saviour's picture at the Bath, with words too execrable and too horrible to be repeated"

To which Steele replied³

"... Your Religion is like your conscience, which has not troubled you for some years

"Thou takest thy Malice for thy Muse, and thinkest thyself inspired, when thou art really possessed with the spirit of envy and malice.

"You tax him (Cibber) with blasphemy, hardness of heart, etc., and I have inquired of everybody that has the least acquaintance; nay, even some that hate him, without any reason, and all affirm they never heard that story of the Bath. Therefore it must be concluded that thou hast minted it thyself"

Cibber seldom lost his temper over a pamphleteer,

¹ *Dramatic Miscellanies*

² *The Character and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*

³ *An Answer to a Whimsical Pamphlet called The Character and Conduct of Sir John Edgar*

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but in connection with this utterly scurrilous attack he did, to the extent of inserting in the *Daily Post* the following advertisement :

“Ten pounds will be paid by Mr Cibber of the Theatre Royal, to any person who shall (by a legal proof) discover the author of a pamphlet intituled : *The Character and Conduct of Sir John Edgar* ”

The author was John Dennis, as Steele was evidently aware, for when he heard of Cibber's offer he wrote : “I am only sorry he has offered so much, because the *twentieth part* would have overvalued his ¹ whole carcase ”

But no one took mad Dennis seriously. He would write the vilest libels against anyone, if only someone else would pay him to do it. An epigrammist wrote of him •

“ Say what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad
On one so poor you cannot take the law,
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw,
Uncaged then let the harmless monster rage,
Secure in dulness, madness, want, and age ¹ ”

Dennis invented a new kind of stage-thunder which he accused Rich of stealing. Off the stage he was always thundering to such an extent that his constant fulminations became a joke with everybody he attacked. He did not criticise, he bombarded, and believing himself to be original when he was only absurd, imagined he was looked upon as a literary dictator whereas he was only regarded as a harmless lunatic.

¹ *I e* Dennis's



MISS

Larvina Fenton

*Miss Larvina Fenton, Duchess of Bolton, the original
Polly Peachum in "The Beggar's Opera"*

Painted by J. Ellys, engraved by J. Faber, jun

CHAPTER XVIII

LAST YEARS OF MANAGEMENT

RICH produced Gay's *Beggar's Opera* at Lincoln's Inn Fields on January 29th, 1728. The profits of this play were so great that it was said to have made Rich gay and Gay rich. It ran for sixty-two¹ days in London and was performed all over England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. In a note to the *Dunciad* Warburton asserted that it was even acted in Minorca. All the fashionable world raved about it. Ladies carried about with them the favourite songs from it painted on their fans, and houses were furnished with screens on which were depicted scenes from the opera. Miss Lavinia Fenton, the original Polly Peachum, became the favourite of the town. At the end of the season she was taken from the stage by the Duke of Bolton, who made her his decent wedded Duchess so soon as his wife obligingly died.

It has been advanced as a proof of Cibber's density that he refused this play when Gay submitted it to him at Drury Lane, but he was only one of many who felt sure it had no chance of success. Congreve said gloomily at rehearsals that it would either make a great hit "or be damned confoundedly."² On the first day of production these uncertainties prevailed throughout the First Act and half-way through the Second. Then the temper of the audience changed. In his box the Duke of

¹ Warburton said 63, but this was incorrect, according to Genest, who was usually accurate

² Genest

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Argyle was heard to say . " It will do—it must do ! I see it in the eyes of them ! " ¹

In the following year Cibber, ever on the alert, tried to do something of the same kind as *The Beggar's Opera* in his *Love in a Riddle*, which, because it was his, was promptly damned by the town

" I remember," wrote Chetwood,² " the first night of *Love in a Riddle* which the hydra-headed multitude resolved to worry without hearing, a custom with authors of merit, when Miss Raftor³ came on in the part of Phillida, the monstrous roar subsided. A person in the stage-box, next to my post, called out to his companions in the following elegant style . ' Zounds, Tom ! Take care ! or this charming little devil will save all ! ' "

Despite the charming little devil's acting, Cibber's play was condemned. The reason why is not far to seek. Gay had by this time written a second part to his *Beggar's Opera*,⁴ which was forbidden by the Lord Chamberlain on account of the political satire it contained. It is said that Gay netted £3000 from the sale of his suppressed play, though he probably lost the Laureateship through it. So serious was the royal displeasure with Gay that the eccentric Kitty, Duchess of Queensberry, who dared to champion him, was forbidden to appear any more at Court. To the official who brought the order from George II, her Grace handed the following impudent note—or said she did.

" The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well-pleased that the King hath given her so agreeable a

¹ Genest Benjamin Victor

² The prompter. He married Cibber's grand-daughter, Jenny, and wrote a not very valuable *History of the Stage*

³ Katherine Raftor, afterwards Mrs Clive. She was an intimate and neighbour of Horace Walpole, and one of Mrs Woffington's most jealous rivals. It was Miss Raftor who said of Garrick, with more force than elegance " Damn him ! I believe he could act a gridiron ! "

⁴ Polly

[illegible]

*Miss Catharine Raftor (Mrs Kitty Clive) as Phillida
in Cibber's "Damon and Phillida"*

Painted by G Schalken



Last Years of Management

command to stay from court, where she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility upon the King and Queen. . . She hopes by such an unprecedented order as this, that the King will see as few as he wishes at his court (particularly such as dare think or speak the truth) ”

This lady, the cousin of “ Old Q,” crowned a bizarre career by dying of a surfeit of cherries eaten in Savile Row

Gay’s friends and Cibber’s enemies spread a rumour that Cibber had found means to get *Polly* suppressed, in order that his own inferior production might have the field to itself Cibber was warned that a demonstration against his play was intended, and on the second night, although the Heir-Apparent was present, there was such an uproar that the actor-manager had to come before the curtain to enforce order

Point-device as usual, periwigged, scented, with snow-white ruffles, his brocaded coat and embroidered vest miracles of tailoring, a fine diamond gleaming on his hand, Cibber strutted on to the stage, bowed, whisked out his laced handkerchief and jewelled snuff-box, and stood there dapper and affable, not a whit abashed, though his reception was very unlike that to which the debonair Lord Foppington was accustomed Catcalls, and a hissing as of all the snakes of the Furies’ tresses, greeted him, together with more tangible missiles in the shape of vegetable produce well past its prime. Cibber’s disarming smiles and obvious good-temper turned these evidences of disfavour into an ovation, and when the noise subsided, he tuned his feeble pipe to that which he had come there to say.

“ Gentlemen, since you are not inclined that this play should go forward, I give you my word that after this night it shall never be acted again But in the meantime—” (with a glance at the Royal Box)—“ I hope you will consider in whose presence you are, and for

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that reason at least, suspend what further marks of your displeasure you may imagine I deserve."

This not undignified appeal was received in dead silence, and the play proceeded. There were no further demonstrations, beyond the departure of certain solemn folk determined not to be placated

The next night all the boxes were let for *Love in a Riddle*. But Cibber kept his word and another play was billed and presented

The best scenes of *Love in a Riddle* were afterwards incorporated in a Ballad Opera entitled *Damon and Phillida*, which had a good reception when it appeared without the author's name.

'Twas ever thus. When *The Provoked Husband* was produced, Cibber enjoyed "a notable success"¹ mainly because no one knew which portions were his, or which Vanbrugh's, and when Cibber printed Vanbrugh's part of the comedy alone, it appeared the audience had applauded the scenes written by Cibber, and maltreated those by Sir John. How Cibber must have laughed in his sleeve!

The old actor's reign as comedian and manager was fast drawing to a close, and the last years of his stage career could not have been very joyous ones. Booth was dying, Mrs. Oldfield was seriously ill, Wilks was dead. True, the death of the last-named in 1732, as Pope wrote to Gay on October 3, left Cibber "without a colleague, absolute and perpetual dictator of the stage." But the old order of things theatrical was steadily yielding place to the new methods of Garrick, and after Booth sold his share to John Highmore, "a gentleman of fortune who unhappily contracted an attachment to the stage from having performed the part of Lothario for a wager,"² and the widow Wilks sent to the theatre as her deputy another amateur in the shape of one Ellis, a painter, Cibber, resentful of their intrusion, "to avoid

¹ Benjamin Victor

² *Biographia Dramatica*.



Clamp Sculp.

THEOPHILUS CIBBER. 1702. 25

In the Character of a Fine Gentleman

Drawn by Wootledge at the Collection of Sir William Musgrave

Theophilus Cibber as a Fine Gentleman

Engraved by R. Clamp, from a drawing in
the Musgrave Collection

Last Years of Management

the Importance of the one and the Ignorance of the other,"¹ deputed his son Theophilus to act for him in the management. This always objectionable young man made himself so thoroughly offensive that Mr. Highmore gladly paid Cibber Senr. three thousand guineas for his share, merely to be rid of his son.² This happy consummation was not arrived at, however, for Theophilus, having once got a footing at Drury Lane, took care not to be ousted easily. He continued to interfere, and eventually stirred up a revolt among Highmore's actors, who went to act at the Haymarket. Old Cibber then applied to the Duke of Grafton (Lord Chamberlain) for a licence for Theophilus, but the Duke, disgusted with the behaviour of both Cibbers, refused it. Benjamin Victor, always a friend and admirer of Colley Cibber, nearly quarrelled with him over this business, and Colley carefully ended his *Apology* just at the point where some sort of apology or explanation was certainly due. After a long struggle the unfortunate Highmore was glad to sell his share to Charles Fleetwood, another amateur. Mrs Booth having previously sold hers to Giffard, manager of Goodman's Fields, he retained his sixth, under the new *regime*, but Fleetwood was in possession of the rest of the Patent. The deserters returned to Drury Lane on March 12th, 1733-4, after which date Cibber's active interference in management ceased, and he retired from the stage, though not from public life. His energies were from henceforth to be concentrated upon literature, and any time he could spare from the pursuit of pleasure

¹ Victor

² The *Daily Post* on March 27th, 1733, announced "Colley Cibber, Esq^{re}, one of the Patentees of his Majesty's Company of Comedians, has sold his entire share of the cloaths, scenes, and Patent, to John Highmore, Esq^{re}. At the end of this season he quits the stage altogether." He had been ill and unable to act since March 5th, so the same journal informs us. He returned to his work on the 29th.

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he devoted to such labours as his *Apology*, his *Character and Conduct of Cicero* (not a meritorious performance), his mutilations of Shakespeare (which caused Fielding scathingly to remark that "no man was better calculated to alter Shakespeare for the worse"),¹ and last, though perhaps he did not consider them least, the Birthday Odes required of him as Laureate.²

¹ *Historical Register*

² For parts taken by Cibber see Appendix B

CHAPTER XIX

CIBBER AS AUTHOR AND POET

CIBBER's appointment as Laureate is dated December 3, 1730. He received the post (left vacant by the death of Eusdon) through Walpole's influence, possibly as a reward for writing *The Nonjuror*—certainly not out of regard for his qualities as a poet. The appointment was a signal for wild howls of indignation from those who desired it and were annoyed it should have been given to a "mere comedian." These gentlemen filled the news-sheets with ill-natured epigrams and satires not in the best taste. Even the *Grub-Street Journal* had its fling at Colley.

" Well, said Apollo, still 'tis mine
To give the real laurel
For that my Pope, my son divine,
Of rivals ends the quarrel
But guessing who would have the luck
To be the Birthday Fibber,
I thought of Dennis, Tibbald, Duck,
But never dreamt of Cibber ! "

A broadside intended to reflect upon Laureate and Court alike, entitled *An Ode for the New Year*, was generally supposed to have been written by Gay. It enshrined this jewel, among others. George II is speaking

" Then, since I have a son, like you,
May he Parnassus rule
So shall the Crown and Laurel too
Descend from F(ool) to F(ool) "

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Another anonymous effusion ran ·

“ In merry old England it once was a rule,
The King had his Poet, and also his Fool,
And now we're so frugal, I'd have you to know it,
That Cibber can serve both for Fool and for Poet ”

Fielding, who was a friend of Gay's, had a slap at Cibber, in his *Pasquin*, though he named no names.

“ *Voter* Poet ! No, my Lord, I'm no Poet I can't make verses

Lord Place No matter for that—you'll be able to make Odes

Voter Odes, my Lord ? What are those ?

Lord P Faith, sir, I cannot tell what they are, but I know you may be qualified for the place, without being a Poet ”

Pope wrote :

“ Great G—¹ such servants since thou well canst lack,
O, save the salary, and drink the sack ! ”²

Even the dignified Dr Johnson was moved to produce an epigram.

“ Augustus still survives in Maro's strain,
And Spenser's verse prolongs Eliza's reign,
Great George's acts let tuneful Cibber sing,
For Nature formed the Poet for the King ”

The relation between this piece of ponderosity and its object was much the same as that existing between a Nasmyth's hammer and a butterfly, and was equally ineffective. That is to say, the butterfly Cibber by sheer airiness and quickness escaped, unbruised, to flit gay as ever from flower to flower, unaffected by so much as the clang of the gigantic instrument lifted to crush him.

Cibber and Johnson never quite hit it off together. Cibber, in that great man's presence, was too conscious of his own superficial cleverness, whilst his daintiness of person shamed the great man's slovenliness to a degree

¹ Grafton, the Lord Chamberlain

² The annual prerogative of the office of Laureate was a tierce of canary, which Cibber was the last to receive

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he sought to hide in contempt. It was a battle whenever the twain met, of their Inferiority Complexes, real or imaginary. Also, it was well known that the Doctor despised all actors—even his beloved pupil, Garrick. “Dancing dogs” he called them, and would only concede that some acted better than others, with the grudging remark “Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others!”¹ For Cibber he had a supreme contempt.

“Colley Cibber, Sir,” he told Boswell, “was by no means a blockhead, but by arrogating to himself too much he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his Birthday Odes should be bad, but that was not the case, Sir, for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he shewed one of them to me, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit.”

Johnson’s dislike of Cibber had its root in the fact that, on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion of the Doctor’s being kept waiting in Chesterfield’s anteroom because my lord was engaged, who should come swaggering out of the sanctum but Colley Cibber. Johnson promptly got up, rolled out of the house and never could be induced to return. He never forgave Chesterfield, nor forgot that Cibber had been the cause of his humiliation. “Such treatment,” he wrote years after to Chesterfield in a much-quoted passage so exquisite that I cannot forbear quoting it once more, “I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before. . . . The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind, but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it, till I am known, and do not want it.”

Lord Lyttelton, to whom Johnson complained of Chesterfield’s treatment, tried to pacify him by saying

¹ Boswell’s *Life*

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that probably Cibber had gone in by the back door and was not in the room ten minutes before Johnson saw him come out. Johnson would not be placated.

But he was far too big a man, in every way, to be unjust, even while he was resentful, and he freely allowed there was considerable merit in some of Cibber's work. He even went so far as to admit there was "no reason to suppose that *The Careless Husband* was not written by himself."¹ But he would not agree with Davies that Cibber had been the first dramatic writer to introduce "genteel" ladies on the stage; whereupon Davies said he meant *genteel, moral* ladies, which set the Doctor off upon his famous dissertation upon gentility and genteelity, the one being, as he said, "honour, and the other exterior grace."

To return to the new Laureate. One of the most scathing epigrams against his appointment ran :

"Tell if you can, which did the worse,
Calgula or Gr(aft)on's Gr—ce ?
That made a Consul of a *Horse*
And this a Laureat of an Ass " ²

Another, appended to the satirical Ode to the New Year already noticed, was in the form of a Pastoral Dialogue.

" *Strephon* Colley has tuned again his Fife
Thyr.sis. Has he ? ———'s life !
Strephon Nor is he yet quite out of breath.
Thyr.sis Not yet ? ———'s death ! "

All the epigrams against Cibber were duly collected by his friends, according to the gentle custom of those who number authors among their acquaintance, and sent to him. But he never showed that he cared one way or the other. They meant that his name was in all men's

¹ Boswell's *Life*

² From *Certain Epigrams, in Laud and Praise of the Gentlemen of the Dunciad*

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mouths, and that was enough for him. He even joined in the rout against himself and wrote epigrams in dispraise of his own Odes. Then he would go to sit in the coffee-houses and hug himself when one of his own lampoons was hailed as a "true bite," or "a palpable hit." Nobody suspected him of this, but when a poetical Knight-errant in the *Whitehall Evening Post* composed some verses in Cibber's favour, Colley was at once accused of having written them himself.

In 1731 the Laureate's house was stripped of its lead by thieves, as a gentle hint, suggested someone, that he "should employ a little less of its quality in his Odes."

In short, Cibber bade fair to oust John Dennis from his unenviable position as the literary "Aunt Sally" and stock joke of the town. Undoubtedly he was the worst Laureate that ever put pen to paper, as witness his verses on the King's Birthday, October 30, 1731.¹ He should not, however, be judged by his Odes, which were execrable, but by his prose, which was masterly, as the description, in his *Apology*, of the acting of Mrs Mountford will show.

"Melantha is as finished an impertinent as ever fluttered in a drawing-room, and seems to contain the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. Her language, dress, motion, manners, soul and body, are in a continual hurry to do something more than is necessary or commendable. And though I doubt it will be a vain labour to offer you a just likeness of Mrs. Mountford's action, yet the fantastic impression is still so strong in my memory, that I cannot help saying something, though fantastically, about it. The first ridiculous airs that break from her are upon a gallant, never seen before, who delivers her a letter from her father, recommending him to her good graces, as an honourable lover. Here now, one would think, she might naturally show a

¹ See Appendix C.

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little of the sex's decent reserve, though never so slightly covered. No, sir, not a tittle of it, modesty is the virtue of a poor-souled country gentlewoman, she is too much a court-lady to be under so vulgar a confusion; she reads the letter, therefore, with a careless, dropping lip, and an erected brow, humming it hastily over, as if she were impatient to outgo her father's commands, by making a complete conquest of him at once, and that the letter might not embarrass her attack, crack! she scrambles it at once into her palm, and pours upon him her whole artillery of airs, eyes, and motion, down goes her dainty, diving body to the ground, as if she were sinking under the conscious load of her own attractions, then launches into a flood of fine language and compliment, still playing her chest forward in fifty falls and risings, like a swan upon waving water, and to complete her impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own wit, that she will not give her lover leave to praise it, silent assenting bows, and vain endeavours to speak, are all the share of the conversation he is admitted to, which, at last, he is relieved from, by her engagement to half-a-score visits, which she swims from him to make, with a promise to return in a twinkling."

The chief charge against Cibber as a writer is that of plagiarism. Yet the fact remains that many good old plays would have lain forgotten among other theatrical lumber, had he not breathed new life upon their dry bones. Thus revived, they long remained on the list of favourites. For the rest, as he put it himself, when he furbished up an old play, it was "as a good housewife will mend old linen, when she has no better employment."

That he tampered unjustifiably with Shakespeare cannot be denied, nor can it be argued, as he tried to argue, that because Dryden took the same liberty Cibber was justified in doing likewise. Two wrongs do not make a right, and insomuch as Dryden was the greater

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writer his work had the more excuse, Cibber's had none, though it is a fact that his alteration of Shakespeare's Richard III held the stage until and even after (for it was long a favourite with bombastic stars of the old school playing in the provinces) Sir Henry Irving restored the original at the Lyceum on January 29th, 1877—and how many of us are prepared to say off-hand whether Shakespeare or Cibber wrote the well-known line

“So much for Buckingham—off with his head?”

The above line is a good example of the way in which Cibber vulgarised the play throughout. Another is his “*barbarous, bloody Act*” (Act IV. Sc. III) in place of Shakespeare’s “*tyrannous and bloody deed*”. Again, he cheapens Richard’s “*Kind Tyrrell, am I happy in thy news?*” (in the same scene) into. “*How are the Brats disposed? Say, am I happy?*”

It is interesting to compare the two versions of Richard’s speech in Act V Sc. III. I give the poet’s own version first

“*K Rich* Give me another horse bind up my wounds
Have mercy, Jesu!—Soft! I did but dream
O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
The lights burn blue”

This Cibber weakens into

“Give me another horse—bind up my wounds
Have Mercy, Heaven! ha! Soft! ’twas but a Dream,
But then so terrible it shakes my Soul,
Cold Drops of Sweat hang on my trembling Flesh,
My Blood grows chilly, and I freeze with Horror
O Tyrant Conscience! how dost thou afflict me?”

It is to be hoped that Cibber’s “Tyrant Conscience” did sometimes “afflict” him for these gross perversions of the text; but he had a way which Richard might have envied him, of stifling that useful mentor when it proved unruly.

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(Fanny Burney, who saw one of Colley's alterations of Shakespeare,¹ wrote in her *Diary* that "every line of Cibber's was poor, feeble and paltry" But in spite of the disapproving *intelligentsia*, Cibber managed to please the great public, which showed its approval by going to see his plays, though it would have none of Pope's unlucky farce, *Three Hours After Marriage*.

When Colley wrote out of his own inner consciousness—as in *Love's Last Shift* and *The Careless Husband*—his plots were lively, his characters well drawn, his dialogues natural That his *Careless Husband* alone was enough "to make a reputation," and that his *Apology* "deserved immortality," was the considered verdict of that far-sighted and exacting critic, Horace Walpole. Swift, no friend to Cibber, sat up all night to read the *Apology* when it first appeared, and even Warburton had a word of praise for this inimitable book

"I have read over Colley," he wrote to Bowyer on January 29, 1743 "He is all you say of him, and more But I love the rogue when he reasons He is then a delightful ass indeed"

Johnson too found this book "very entertaining," though he diluted his praise with the remark "As for Cibber himself, taking from his conversation all that he ought not to have said, he was a poor creature"

Colley wrote his *Apology* in Bath, which city he had first visited as far back as 1703, when Queen Anne was in residence there and the Drury Lane company went down to act, in a house near the Upper Borough Walls, at the top of Vicarage Lane² In Bath Cibber, after his retirement from theatrical management, became a well-known figure and very much in his element, mixing with the fashionable in the Pump Room, exchanging snuff and sartorial gossip with his brother-snob, Beau Nash; in whose honour he wrote with his diamond ring

¹ *King Lear*

² Lewis Melville's *Bath under Beau Nash*.

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on a windowpane in Lindsey's house the following verse :

" Let Kings their power by lineal birth inherit,
Nash holds his empire from his public spirit
If Populi with Dei Vox we join,
This place at least he rules by right divine
Learn Britons hence the needfull use of Kings,
From Freedom bound general welfare springs "

To which doggerel another hand replied :

" O Nash ! more blest in ev'ry other Thing,
But in thy Poet, wretched as a King !
Thy Realm disarm of such offensive Tool,
Ah ! leave not this, this weapon to a Fool
Thy happy reign all other Discord quells,
O do but silence Cibber and the Bells,¹
Apollo's genuine sons thy fame shall raise,
And all mankind, but Cibber, sing thy Praise ! " ²

The lines to Nash are a fair sample of Cibber's poetry (so-called) Of his prose a great critic ³ wrote " There is in it a great deal of the spirit (of Literature) with a little too much of the froth "

All his tragedies, in accordance with contemporary usage, are in blank verse, of which the only thing to be said for it is that it is unspoilt by mannerisms ; for the rest it is unmusical and entirely without subtlety. Cibber used almost to excess the Elizabethan device of a rhyming couplet to mark an exit, without the Elizabethan's need to adopt this expedient, *i e.* lack of scenery

Cibber was not a great writer because he was a shallow man in whom was no room for a deep philosophy of life, for poetic feeling nor for tragic consciousness His powers of thought were concerned only with the obvious

¹ A reference to Beau Nash's noisy method of greeting visitors with the pealing of the Abbey bells, and a further tocsin performed outside their lodgings by the City Waits

² From MS in Malet collection, British Museum

³ Hazlitt

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and external, and he was too anxious for applause to venture far out of the beaten track and give rein to his own originality.

In his *Lady's Last Stake* (1708) there is a glaring instance of Cibber's inability to get into the skin of any character created by him on paper. Here he makes an honourable gentleman cheat at cards for the purpose of seducing another man's wife. Cibber had not the instincts of a fine gentleman of his period, though he was so well able to simulate the appearance of one, therefore he could not know that although such a person *might* seduce his neighbour's wife and be none the worse thought of, he would never, *never* stoop to cheat at cards. Cibber continually made mistakes in such small points of detail simply because he did not know what instinct alone could have taught him. This, though it was less his fault than his misfortune, constituted a grave flaw which was the cause of most of his mistakes and unpopularity.

In a pamphlet called *The Tryal of Colley Cibber*, published in 1740,¹ the comedian was formally charged "for that you, not having the Fear of Grammar before your Eyes, on the First of April, at a certain place called the Bath, and in Knightsbridge, in the county of Middlesex, in and upon the English Language an Assault did make, and then and there, with a certain Weapon called a Goose-Quill, value one Farthing, which you in your left hand then held, several very broad Wounds, but of no Depth at all, on the said English Language did make, and so you the said Colley the said Language did murder. To which the Prisoner pleaded *Not Guilty*."

And so on, for many crabbed pages. Eventually the Jury decide in the author's favour, "considering that he had stood already three times in the Censorial Pillory and been well pelted."

Of all the critics of Cibber's style, none was more

¹ See Appendix F.

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severe than himself “Unequal, pert and frothy, patch’d and particoloured, like the Coat of a Harlequin, frequently aiming at Wit, without ever hitting the Mark; a mere Ragout, tossed up from the Offals of other authors, my Subject below all Pens but my own.” Such was his criticism of his own *Apology*; written no doubt with his tongue in his cheek and yet with more than a touch of the sincerity to which, in his better moments, he was prone. Something of honesty there was in the little man, something of the truth—a spark of the Divine Fire amidst all his meretricious glitter

Probably no one who read it enjoyed more than Cibber did that passage in the *Trial* wherein the anonymous author pounced on the dramatist’s favourite simile—a Lion “This brings to my mind a story which I once heard from Booth, that our Biographer had in one of his plays, in a Local Simile, introduced this generous Beast in some country or island where Lions did not grow, of which being informed by the learned Booth, the Biographer replied: ‘*Prithee tell me then where there is a Lion, for, God’s Curse! if there be a Lion in EUROPE, AFRICA, or AMERICA, I will not lose my Simile!*’”¹

¹ For Chronology of Cibber’s Works see Appendix D

CHAPTER XX

THE QUARREL WITH POPE

“How like children do we judge of happiness !” Cibber wrote in *The Careless Husband*¹ “When I was stunted in my fortune, almost everything was a pleasure to me, because most things were out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for them, now Fortune’s in my hand, she’s as insipid as an old acquaintance. It’s mighty silly, faith !”

Mighty silly—and mighty human, though probably the man who was only in his thirties when he wrote it was less in a position to realise it than was the dapper, fresh-faced sexagenarian who, when he returned from Bath to London, went tripping about town on his high scarlet heels, showing off his muff and brocaded coat among the Macaronis of St James’s, whose pedigree Horace Walpole caustically traced through Lord Chatham “who begot the East India Company · the East India Company begot Lord Clive, Lord Clive begot the Macaronis; they begot poverty, and all the race are still living.”

A catch of the period dealt with this strange breed .

“Five pounds of hair they wear behind,
The ladies to delight, O !
Their senses give unto the wind
To make themselves a fright, O !
This fashion who does e’er bestow
I think a simple tony,
For he’s a fool, say what you will,
Who is a Macaroni ”

¹ See Appendix E Act I Sc 1

The Quarrel with Pope

George Selwyn was one of them, Charles James Fox another. They took their name from that of a new dish lately introduced at Almack's Club. When, in 1755, the cabriolet was invented, Macaronis had cabriolets embroidered on their waistcoats and stockings, and patched on their faces. They wore ribbons at their knees until Sixteen-String Jack, a highwayman, killed the fashion by very inconsiderately being hanged so attired. These fantastic little men filled in, with little intrigues and a lot of high play, their very little day. It did not last long. Fox sounded the death-knell of the coterie when he became a Republican, and exchanged his silks and satins for a buff waistcoat and a blue frock-coat.

There is no evidence that Cibber was a Macaroni. But he was a member of the exclusive club which many of them sighed in vain to enter—White's. Colley himself only escaped being blackballed when he sought election, because he was such an amusing rattle. After his election he gave a dinner to Mr. Arthur (the proprietor) and his wife. When this was over, the doors were opened and the Laureate was introduced to a company of peers and gentlemen who cried "Come in, King Coll! Welcome, King Colley!"¹

Everything, and more than everything, he had ever wanted, was now Colley's. Fame, a certain measure of wealth, a great deal of publicity, and none of it had been gained so easily as to render him *blasé*. At seventy he was still in love with life, still desired gratuitous advertisement, which he got, full measure, pressed down and running over, in his famous quarrel with Pope.

The leaves of this literary storm in a teacup had been stewing ever since 1717, when Pope, in conjunction with Gay and Arbuthnot, wrote a farce called *Three Hours After Marriage*, which was acted only once at Drury Lane, with Cibber as Plotwell. It was an un-

¹ Davies' *Dramatic Miscellany*. Pope in the *Dunciad*, Bk I, lines 320-23, refers to this episode

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pleasant production for which, wrote Dr. Doran, "its trio of authors stand stigmatised for their attempt to bring in the old corruption." What Cibber was doing in this galley with his openly avowed intention to purify the stage, I do not know. Perhaps the imposing collaboration of authors scared him when the MS was submitted to the management at Drury Lane. Perhaps he hoped the town would do for the play that which he would have been made too dearly to pay for had he attempted to damn it on his own authority. The town very emphatically would have none of it. A month later, when *The Rehearsal* was by royal command revived, Cibber, in the character of Bayes, introduced a gag: "Now, Sir," he said, "since this Revolution I had some thought of introducing by a quite different contrivance, but my design taking air, some of your sharp wits, I found, had made use of it before me, otherwise I intended to have stolen one of them¹ in the shape of a Mummy and the other in that of a Crocodile."

The reference was unmistakable. It was to an incident in *Three Hours After Marriage*, in which two gentlemen in love with the wife of a pedant contrived to get access to her by having themselves conveyed as Rarities to the sage, the one swathed in the wrappings of a Mummy, and the other in a Crocodile's skin.²

All but one of Cibber's audience that night roared at his gag, but the one who was not amused was Pope himself. Boiling with rage, white-lipped and shaking, he went behind the scenes and fell upon Cibber "with all the foul language that a Wit out of his Senses could be capable of."³ To this Cibber, as soon as he had recovered from his first amaze (for though he had played

¹ I.e. *The Two Kings of Brentford*

² Gay, in a letter to Pope, afterwards took all the blame for the introduction of the mummy and the crocodile. "Indeed I ought," he wrote, "the notion being first mine, and never heartily approved by you."

³ Letter from Cibber to Pope, July, 1742

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for a laugh, he had not expected quite the effect that his gag produced), replied that since Mr. Pope had so far forgotten himself as to speak in a most ungentlemanly manner, he (Cibber) would never fail to repeat his gag whenever and wherever *The Rehearsal* was acted.¹ Pope, in impotent revenge, thereafter attacked Cibber in print on all occasions, usually choosing that very successful play *The Nonjuror* as the subject of attack.

Thus, in a letter to Mr. Jervas (printed in one of the earlier editions of his collected works) the angry poet wrote: "Your Acquaintance on this side the water, are under terrible Apprehensions from your long stay in Ireland, that you may grow too polite, for we think (since the great success of such a play as *The Nonjuror*) that Politeness is gone over the water."

In another letter, to Robert Digby, in 1718, Pope wrote: "My Lady Scudamore, from having rusticated in your company too long, really behaves herself scandalously among us. She pretends to open her eyes for the sake of seeing the sun, and to sleep because it is night, drinks tea at nine in the morning, and is thought to have said her prayers before, talks without any manner of shame, of good books, and has not seen Cibber's play of *The Nonjuror*."

Thus the poet continued to gibe at the comedian, apparently without effect on that impenetrable gentleman, until Cibber suddenly published a pamphlet which he called *A Letter to Mr. Pope*. Dated February 13th, 1742, it is too long to give in its entirety, and a few extracts must suffice, as in the case of his next two letters to the same address.

"SIR,

"As our familiar correspondence has hitherto been carried on with very little ceremony, I shall, without

¹ He did repeat it, several times, so Genest says, until he and the town wearied of it

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‘farther Preface, let you know, that there is lately come to my Hands an undoubted Copy of some new lines, which in the next Edition of your *Dunciad* now in the Press you intend to honour my name with.¹ I take it for granted they were sent to me by your own Direction, because I cannot imagine any other person could be equally impatient to do me that sort of favour. . . . The lines I have received are these .

“ Close to those Walls, where Folly holds her throne ²
And laughs to think Monroe would take her down,
Where o’er the Gates, by his Fam’d Father’s Hand
Great Cibber’s brazen, brainless Brothers stand ” ³

“ First give me leave to observe that those figures do not *stand*, but *lye* Do you observe, Sir ? I say they are no more *upright* than you are when you *stand*, or write; nay, they *lye* as flat as you do sometimes when you write. . . . Nay, I will do you more (Justice) and show the world how ingenuously your learned friend Scriblerus ⁴ has illustrated the merry Merit of these Verses in his Notes, viz .

“ *Ver* 30 Brazen—Brothers

The critics have disputed, whether these images were of Brass, or two Blocks,⁵ let this be decided according as the Person related to them is judg’d to have the greater Share of Assurance or Stupidity ”

“ Adod, Mr. Pope ! I did not think your Friend had

¹ In the year 1742 Pope “ was unfortunately persuaded by Dr Warburton to write the Fourth Book of the *Dunciad*, which I cannot forbear considering as an injudicious and incongruous addition to that Poem as I also do the degrading Theobald from being the hero of that poem, and substituting Cibber ”—Wharton

² Bedlam

³ The statues of Raving and Melancholy, by Caius Gabriel Cibber

⁴ Pope’s pseudonym in the Preface to the *Dunciad*

⁵ Owing to their having been painted black, it was for some time a question whether the figures were of stone or metal That they were of Portland Stone, the son of the sculptor was perfectly aware

The Quarrel with Pope

been such a Wit! Why this is so very fine, you might almost have written it yourself! What a miraculous Strength and Power has he given to my Assurance and Stupidity! How prettily has he insinuated that Stone is Brass, or Brass is Stone, according as I am known to shine in either of these Qualities! What a *curiosa Felicitas* has he hit upon! But, dear Mr. Pope, not to be too serious with you, are you sure that any man's calling me stupid is a proof of my being so? . . . To come a little closer to the case, if in your Passing the Street an Oysterwoman, with a broad Laugh, should show you the Sign of an Owl and a Monkey, and bawl out to you, look! look! Poet Pope! There's a Brace of your Brothers! would there be any great difference between her Wit upon You, and yours upon me? unless that probably you might be more hurt by the one than I possibly might be by the other.

"And so, Sir, if these Verses, with the Note upon them, is a Specimen of that formidable Vengeance I am to tremble at, . . . you are heartily welcome to go on with it. But unless you think it worth while to mend your Hand upon me, I am in doubt whether I shall give you the Trouble of any farther Reply. In the meantime, to get out of your debt as fast as I can, though my poetical payments are not made in such golden Coin as yours, yet, if you will accept of what *Brass* I am master of, the following sum is at your service, viz. :

"Still *brazen, brainless*! Still the same dull Chime!
Is Impudence, in Prose, made Wit by Rhyme?
No wonder then, thou art so fam'd in Satire,
Thou need'st but rhyme, and leave the rest to Nature.
Thy Nature be my Champion then—I have done!
No pen can worse bewray thee than thine own!
On me thy Wit's so worn, so void of Smart,
I read, I yawn, and (by your leave too) —t"

Johnson considered it likely that, in ridiculing the Laureate, Pope "imagined that he satirised those by

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whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance with which he affected to insult the great."¹ He also pointed out (but rather too late in the day) that Pope had been better advised to leave Cibber alone, for "when Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber nobody inquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity. He should have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shown as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory Cibber had nothing to lose . . . Silence only could have made him despicable, the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain."²

By his anger, therefore, Pope showed his own pain; but inflicted none (so far as could be judged) on the man who provoked him. He professed not to care what Cibber wrote of him, and called such letters as the above, "his diversions," but the younger Richardson, who was present when he was reading Cibber's letter, and marked the twitching of his face, said afterwards that he hoped he might ever be preserved from such "diversions" himself.³

¹ Johnson's *Life of Pope*

² *Ibid*

³ At one time it seems Pope intended to prosecute Cibber for "making too free with his character." Cibber, when he heard of it, is said to have made use of an offensive expression, which he was challenged to repeat in front of Pope. He wagered one hundred guineas that he would do so. Accordingly he appeared before the curtain at Drury Lane on an occasion when Pope was in the Stage-Box with the Solicitor and Attorney-General, and, remarking that he had a story to tell, repeated the offensive epithet a dozen times or more in the course of it. He won his bet.

The only authority for this story is a leaflet entitled *Cibber's Trencher-Makers*, printed by Nursey, Long Acre

CHAPTER XXI

THE "DUNCIAD"

POPE's own account of what he called "the war of the Dunces," as given by him in a dedication to Lord Middlesex, in the name of Savage, was as follows :

"When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the Preface to their *Miscellanies*, to publish such little pieces of theirs as had casually got abroad, there was added to them the Treatise of the Bathos, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry. It happened that, in one chapter of this piece, the several species of bad artists were ranged in classes, to which were prefixed all the letters of the alphabet (most of them at random) : but such was the number of poets eminent in that art that someone or other took every letter to himself,¹ all fell into so violent a fury that, for half a year or more, the common newspapers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods and scurrilities they could possibly devise; a liberty no ways to be wondered at in those people, and in those papers, that, for many years during the uncontrolled licence of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age, and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure

"This gave Mr. Pope the thought that he now had some opportunity of doing good, by detecting and

¹ Johnson, for one, did not believe the letters were placed at random, and held Pope to be the aggressor in a fight he must bitterly have regretted initiating

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dragging into light these common enemies of mankind. . . . He was not without hopes that, by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to recommend them, either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the *Dunciad*. . . ”¹

The Dunciad, as it stands in the quarto edition of 1729, consists of three books only, and was written in 1726². In 1727 an imperfect edition was published in Dublin and reprinted in London. In this the original version, the hero of the poem was Theobald, whom Wharton described as a “ cold, plodding, tasteless writer and critic who with great propriety was chosen on the death of Settle, by the Goddess of Dulness, to be the chief instrument of that great work which was the subject of the Poem, namely (as our author expresses it) of the lowest diversions of the rabble of Smithfield, to be the entertainment of the court and town; the action of the *Dunciad* being, the removal of the imperial seat of Dulness from the city to the polite world, as that of the *Æneid* is the removal of the empire of Troy to Latium ”³

Whatever may have been Pope's intention in writing *The Dunciad*, his reason for preferring Theobald to the throne of the Dunces was obvious. Theobald, far better qualified than Pope to edit Shakespeare, had followed up

¹ Wharton's edition of the collected works

² Wharton

³ In an advertisement in the *Daily Journal* of May 11th, 1728, was published a list of “ all such Persons whether living or dead who are abused in the Volumes lately published by P and Co ”. The list comprises “ ALMIGHTY GOD THE KING THE QUEEN HIS LATE MAJESTY Both Houses of Parliament The Privy Council The Established Church The Bench of Bishops The Present Ministry ”. And further includes Shakespeare, Addison, Sir William Temple, Sir Richard Steele, Ambrose Philips, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Congreve, Dennis, Sir R. Blackmore, Colley Cibber, Theobald, and forty more

The "Dunciad"

the Poet's edition with one of his own, entitled: "*Shakespeare restored*, or a Specimen of the many Errors as well committed as unamended by Mr Pope in his late edition of this poet." Here was *lèse-majesté* indeed! Pope promptly made Theobald the King of Dunces, and brought out a second edition of Shakespeare in which he printed, without acknowledgment, most of Theobald's notes. Lady Wortley Montagu's epithet of "the Wicked Wasp of Twickenham" was well applied to Pope. Becoming spiteful under the least provocation, he stung the offender mercilessly and without much regard for truth. He stung Lady Mary herself, he stung Nance Oldfield and John Dennis, and a host of others, and would have gone on stinging Theobald had not a worse offender appeared to divert his venom. This was little Cibber—the fop, the buffoon at whom all the town laughed—Cibber, a mere comedian! His very insignificance in Pope's eyes added to his offensiveness.

In 1742, therefore, Pope was so ill-advised by Warburton as to add a Fourth Book to his *Dunciad*, and to bring out a new edition of the whole Poem, with Cibber as hero. The poem lost much by the change. It had been conceived to suit the dull, pedantic Theobald, and was not in any way applicable to the vivacious comedian who, with all his faults, had wit and common-sense and plenty of shrewd humour. But the Wasp knew the weak joint in his adversary's harness. Cibber was inordinately vain. The wily Pope, in the refinement of malice, held him up to the gaze of the town as a Dunce, and so penetrated his armour. The sting went home the more surely because Cibber's own conscience told him the attack was not entirely without justification. As a writer he knew himself shallow and ignorant, a skimmer on the surface of things. As a poet he was the worst that ever penned a line. As a stage-manager he had collaborated in the production of pantomimes which were calculated to lower the character of the stage. But

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he affected to believe that Pope only attacked him to increase his own circle of readers.

"When I find my Name in the satirical works of this poet," he had already written in his *Apology*, "I never look upon it as any malice meant to me, but PROFIT to himself. For he considers that *my Face* is more *known* than most in the nation; and therefore a *Lick at the Laureate* will be a sure bait *ad captandum vulgus*, to catch little readers."

Sweet as they still are were the uses of advertisement in the early eighteenth century!

Cibber took no notice of Pope for thirteen months. Then, all in the good cause of publicity, and because, he declared, he was driven to it "by the desire of Several Persons of Quality,"¹ he wrote "A Letter to Mr Pope, enquiring into the motives that might induce him in his Satyrical Works, to be so frequently fond of Mr Cibber's Name."

"Since the publication of your last new Dunciad," he wrote, "(where you still seem to enjoy your so often repeated Glory of being bright upon my Dulness), my Friends now insist, that it will be thought Dulness indeed or a plain confession of my being a Bankrupt in Wit, if I don't immediately answer those bills of Discredit you have drawn upon me. For, say they, your dealing with him like a Gentleman in your *Apology for your own Life* you see has had no sensible effect upon him, as appears by the wrong-headed Reply his notes upon the New Dunciad have made to it . . . But pray, Gentlemen, said I, if, as you seem to believe, his Defamation has more of Malice than Truth in it, does he not blacken himself by it? Why then should I give myself the trouble to prove, what you and the world are already convinced of?" and since after near Twenty Years having

¹ *Vide* Theatrical Bills of the period

The "Dunciad"

been libell'd by our Daily-paper Scriblers, I was never so hurt as to give them one single answer, why would you have me seem to be more sore now, than at any other time? . . ."

(P. 7) "As to those dull Fellows, they granted my Silence was right; yet they could not but think Mr. Pope was too eminent an Author to justify my equal Contempt of him; and that a Disgrace from such a Pen might stick upon me to Posterity . . ."

(P. 9) "Every Man's Work must, and will always speak *For* or *Against* itself, whilst it has a remaining Reader in the world. All I shall say then as to that Point is, that I wrote more to be Fed than to be Famous, and since my Writings still give me a Dinner, do you rhyme me out of my Stomach if you can. And I own myself so contented a Dunce that I would not have even your merited Fame in Poetry, if it were to be attended with half the fretful Solicitude you seem to have lain under to maintain it. . . ."

(P. 10) "You, like outrageous Nero, are for whipping and branding every poor Dunce in your Dominions that had the stupid insolence not to like you, or your Musick. . . . What have you gained by it? a mighty matter! A Victory over a parcel of poor Wretches that were not able to hurt or resist you, so weak it was almost Cowardice to conquer them, or, if they actually *did* hurt you, how much weaker have you shewn yourself in so openly owning it? . . . And to that public spirited Pretence of your only chastising them *in terrorem* to others of the same malicious Disposition, I doubt is but too thin a Disguise of the many restless hours they have given you. If your Revenge upon them was necessary we must own you have amply enjoyed it. But to make that Revenge the chief Motive of writing your Dunciad, seems to me a weakness that an Author of your Abilities should rather have chosen to conceal. . . . The very lines you have

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so sharply pointed to destroy them, will now remain but so many of their Epitaphs, to transmit their Names to Posterity. . . .”

(P. 13) “You seem in your Dunciad to have been angry at the rain for wetting you, why then would you go into it? You could not but know that an Author when he publishes a Work, exposes himself to all Weathers. He then that cannot bear the worst, should stay at home, and not write at all . . .”

(P. 30) “However, I still comfort myself in one Advantage I have over you, that of never having deserved your being my Enemy. . . .”

(P. 41) “To show I am not blind to your Merit, I own your Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot (though I there find myself contemptuously spoken of) gives me more delight than any one Poem of the kind I ever read . . . In this Epistle, ver 59 of your Folio Edition, you seem to bless yourself that you are not my friend¹ If you choose not to be mine, Sir, it does not follow that it was equally my Choice not to be yours, but perhaps you thought me your Enemy because you were conscious you had injured me, and therefore were resolved never to forgive me, because I had it in my Power to forgive you. . . . But I am glad to find, in your smaller Edition, that your Conscience has since given this line some correction, for there you have taken off a little of the Edge. . . . This is so uncommon an Instance of your checking your Temper and taking a little shame to yourself that I could not in Justice omit my notice of it. . . .”

(P. 61) “If a Man, from his being admitted the best Poet, imagine himself so much lifted above the World,

¹ In the folio edition Pope had written “Cibber and I are luckily no friends” This he afterwards altered to “The players and I are luckily no friends” This correction appears in some folios of 1734, which is inexplicable, until one remembers that Pope corrected the text while the folios were issuing from the press.

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that he has a right to run amuck, and make Sport with the Characters of all Ranks of People, to soil and begrime every Face that is obnoxious to his ungovernable Spleen or Envy: can so vain, so inconsiderate, so elated an Insolence, amongst all the Follies he has lash'd and laugh'd at, find a Subject fitter for Satyr than Himself? . . ."

(P. 66) "If Solitude pleases you, who shall say you are not in the right to enjoy it? Perhaps too, by this time, you may be upon a par with Mankind, and care as little for their company as they do for yours; though I rather hope you have chosen to be so shut up, in order to make yourself a better man. If you succeed in *that*, you will indeed be, what nobody else in haste will be, a better Poet than you *are*. And so, Sir, I am, just as much as you believe me to be,

"Your humble servant,

"July 7th,

"COLLEY CIBBER."

1742.

Of this opusculum Walpole on July 29th wrote to Mann. "Cibber has published a little pamphlet against Pope, which has a great deal of spirit, and, from some circumstances, will notably vex him."

For the moment, however, the Poet was content to leave his *Dunciad* to intrigue the town with his opinion of its favourite comedian. On November 27th Pope wrote to Warburton: "I hear the Laureat is going to publish a very abusive pamphlet. That is all I can desire, it is enough if it be abusive, and if it be his. He threatens *you*; but, I think, you will not fear or love him so much as to answer him, though you have answered one or two as dull. He will be more to me than a dose of hartshorn, and as a stink revives one who has been oppressed with perfumes, his railing will cure me of a course of flatteries."

Cibber's letter, dated December 20th, 1743, duly

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appeared. In it Cibber took (as he expressed it) "a cool tilt" not only at Pope but at Warburton as well. The pamphlet was headed: "Another occasional letter from Mr. C to Mr. P. in which the new Hero's Preference to the Throne in the Dunciad seems not to be accepted."

There are signs in this letter that Cibber was growing weary of too much Mr. Pope. It is couched in coarser language than he had employed hitherto, and on page 30 he is guilty of the bad taste of remarking upon Pope's deformity, when he represents the public as saying: "Pox on him! He writes like a Taylor, nay, and a bad Taylor too. This new Fool's Coat he has cut for Colley fits him no more than the Zig-zag Suit on his own back would become any man alive but himself!"

But to give Colley his due, he repented of that in the next paragraph

"Personal reflections are poor and spiteful arguments," he decided. Yet he apparently did not think it so spiteful to relate an unsavoury incident in Pope's past, when he himself (so he alleged) saved that "Tom-Tit" from a house of ill-fame to which certain of his "aristocratic" friends had beguiled him.

The letter begins: "I am glad to see you abroad again—but I must beg your pardon, for though I don't intend to do you any wrong, I cannot be persuaded to mince the matter while I am showing the world a little more of you. . . ."

(P. 7) "If you had not been a blinder Booby than myself you would have sat down quietly with the last Black Eye I gave you. For so loath was I to squabble with you, that though you have been snapping and snarling at me for twenty years together, you saw, I never so much as gave you a single Growl, or took any notice of you. . . . Now Souse! out comes your old Dunciad in a new dress, like fresh gold upon stale

The "*Dunciad*"

Gingerbread, sold in Pennyworths of shining King Colley, crowned the Hero of Immortal Stupidity ! ”

The major part of Colley's letter was addressed to Warburton, who had written most of the notes to the *Dunciad* and therein vented his spleen on Cibber; but at the end, our friend returns to Pope, for “a last notice” of him.

(P. 41) “Don't expect I should now talk to you in my former stile of Reproach and Complaint, like an Equal, but in a quite different manner, that of a charitable relation who has taken you to his care and has a right to chide you like his Child when you misbehave yourself.”

(P. 42) “What I say is for thy good, and if thou makest a right use of it, thou wilt find it so ! I therefore tell thee again, thou hast been unfortunately wrong ! for I cannot but say that thy low Invention of making the Laureat the new hero of thy *Dunciad* without producing the least evidence of his Pretence to the Title, is but a wretched reply to his Letter, and leaves him but the same Laughing Fellow he was before thy Weakness was angry with him. . . .”

(P. 52) “Till with the Temper of the Laureat thou canst join him in the Laugh, when thou liest open to the Jest, thou wilt only avenge thy Enemies upon thyself, and at best, but die an anxious, celebrated, miserable Man. . . .”

(P. 55) “Henceforward . . . honestly ask thy Conscience two or three plain questions, viz. is such, or such a Character as I have drawn it, really like the Person I intended it for ? Has Prejudice no hand in it ? If in this thy Conscience admits thee blameless and owns it justly drawn ; be not yet too hasty, inquire too of thy Prudence and thy Charity, by what human Duty art thou called upon to publish it ? ”

Well for Cibber—for instance, in his character of Wilks—had he personally acted in accordance with the

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spirit of this exordium! Pope had no opportunity to do so, as within a few months of its publication he was dead.

There is little doubt that Pope was more hurt by the contest than Cibber, who never lost his temper, even though he came perilously near doing so in his last letter. In no respect were the antagonists evenly matched; but Cibber had one great advantage, and that was his robust health. This, with his strong animal spirits and innocent egoism, made him what he called himself, "impene-trable." Pope was a sick man, with all the irritability and peevishness of the constant valetudinarian added to the hypersensitiveness inseparable from his deformity. For the rest, a careful study of the correspondence on both sides leaves one wondering if the parties were sincerely quarrelling, or only writing one against the other to keep their names fresh on the public palate. Both loved publicity. Pope himself in one of his letters to Addison had written: *To be uncensured and to be obscure is the same thing.* Even he, in the beginning, may not have been entirely in earnest. But he lost his temper too soon, and with it, to a great extent, the victory which some maintain was his—which assuredly should, by reason of his genius, have been his. "Pope's satire," wrote one of his biographers,¹ "is immortal, whereas Cibber's sarcasms are no longer read."

But it was well for Pope that his fame rested on a surer foundation than this crazy structure of his *Dunciad*. "What," demanded Wharton, "are the impressions left upon the mind after a perusal of this poem? Contempt, aversion, vexation, and anger. No sentiments that enlarge, ennoble, move, or mend the heart. Insomuch that I know a person . . . who, after reading a book of the *Dunciad*, always soothes himself by turning to a canto in the *Faery Queen*."

¹ Dr Aitken

The "Dunciad"

An equally effective antidote would be a chapter out of the *Apology for the Life of*—the Dunciad's hero ! One needs more than an ounce of civet to sweeten the imagination after an examination of the contents of this cesspool of a great man's obscenity

Truly it seems tragic that the final effort of Pope's genius had not been spent on a subject more inspiring—on that, for instance, he had already touched upon in his *Dying Christian to his Soul*, and so exquisitely adumbrated in a phrase when, on his deathbed, he said to Spence : "I am so certain of the Soul's being immortal that I seem to feel it within me, as it were by intuition."

CHAPTER XXII

THE CURTAIN FALLS

POPE died on May 30th, 1744. In the following year came Culloden and the end of the Stuarts—the passing of Romance; the firm establishment of the Commonplace in English History.

In the same year passed Jonathan Swift, a mighty spirit, mightily tormented, to the place where, as his own epitaph declared, “fierce indignation can lacerate his heart no more” At his feet, where poor Vanessa humbly longed to be, was laid his faithful Stella, the woman he adored and whose true heart he broke

Gay was dead, and many another—friend or enemy—that had entered Cibber’s life for good or ill Yet that indomitable youth lived on, hale and hearty as ever.

Before the quarrel with Pope he had actually returned to the stage to play once more the part in which he had so offended that illustrious man—Bayes, in *The Rehearsal*, which he acted in 1734. During the ensuing season he appeared in several of his old parts, notably that of Fondlewife, which he played at the benefit of poor old Owen Swiney, who, after long residence abroad, had come back to London to be Keeper of the King’s Mews.

On June 21st, 1737, had been passed what Genest called “a gagging bill for the stage” in the shape of the Licensing Act, which limited the number of theatres and enacted that no play should be produced without a licence. The Act was brought into being as a protest against the political satires in plays by Fielding and others. One such play, *The Golden Rump*, was so scurril-

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ous that Giffard, the manager to whom it was submitted, showed it to Walpole, who promptly brought in a Bill to prevent the recurrence of any such offence.

Lord Chesterfield opposed the Bill in a celebrated speech, but it passed, and in February, 1738, William Chetwynd was sworn in as Licencer under the Lord Chamberlain, at a salary of £400 a year, with a Deputy at £200 (the first was Odell), lest he should be over-fatigued by reading plays.¹

Naturally Cibber took a great interest in the promulgation of this Act, of which he approved, though the Abbé Le Blanc, who happened to be in England at the time, wrote that its passing "occasioned a universal murmur in the nation . In all the coffee-houses it was treated as an unjust law and manifestly contrary to the liberties of the people of England "

Cibber, who had suffered so much in his time from the high-handedness of Lord Chamberlains, thought the Act no worse than their tyranny By a process of that "reasoning " which Warburton found so delightful in him, he was able to come to the gratifying conclusion that my Lord Newcastle and his predecessors had acted illegally by exerting an authority which really did not carry them so far as they had insisted on going, since now, argued Cibber, " the Power of Licensing Plays is given to a proper Person is a strong Presumption that no Law had ever given that Power to any such Person before." ²

So pleased was he with this very characteristic argument that he did not, for once, seek to clinch it with one of his beloved Latin tags !

Colley's *Papal Tyranny*, an impudent adaptation of Shakespeare's *King John*, was rehearsed in 1736, but owing to the outcry against such mutilation, was not produced. In fact, the anger of his critics was such that even Cibber could not ignore it. His manner of noticing it was characteristic One day, when the play was in rehearsal,

¹ Genest

² *Apology*

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he walked on to the stage, took the MS off the prompter's desk, pocketed it, and stalked out again, all in a stony silence¹ After this, the play was put aside to await a more propitious moment

In 1738 Cibber agreed with Fleetwood, the new Patentee of Drury Lane, to appear as Richard III, Fondlewife, Sir John Brute, etc It was an unfortunate venture. The old actor's day was manifestly over. His voice, never an asset, was almost gone, his articulation, owing to lack of teeth, was indistinct, and on the night that *Richard III* was produced Cibber confessed to Benjamin Victor that he would gladly give the fifty guineas he was to receive from Fleetwood, to be sitting at home in his easy-chair by the fire²

Treating of Cibber's previous performances in the rôle of Richard III, the author of *The Laureat* wrote · "When in the heart of the battle at Bosworth Field the King is dismounted, our Comic-Tragedian came on the stage, and in a seeming panic, screamed out this line thus: 'A harse, a harse, my Kingdom for a harse!'" This highly delighted some, and disgusted others of his auditors, and when he was killed by Richmond one might plainly perceive that the good people were not better pleased that *so execrable a tyrant* was destroyed, than that *so execrable an actor* was silent."

Yet in what Roger North called the "court tune" or dialect, the *O* was always pronounced *A* Titus Oates had affected this pronunciation in the hope of passing for a fine gentleman, and Cibber continued it to win laughs. This affectation was all very well in a Lord Foppington, but why he allowed it to issue from the lips of Richard III was best known to himself. Probably it had become a habit, and sharing Oates's ambition to appear fine, he always talked in this affected fashion. Cibber acted Lord Foppington as cleverly off the stage as on it; and acquitted himself in both situations so well

¹ Davies

² *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*

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as almost to deceive the elect. But not always, and never quite. In one of Walpole's letters to Horace Mann (October 31st, 1741), noting the guests at Sir Thomas Robinson's ball, he wickedly added: "There were none but people of the best fashion, except Mr ***, Mr Cibber, Mr *****, the *** family, and you know all these have an alloy."

In the following October we find this supercilious creature again writing to his namesake, with another reference to Cibber. "Old Cibber plays to-night," he wrote, "and all the world will be there."

On such occasions, the compliment, was paid Cibber of putting no name on the bills but his own.

On January 12th, 1741-2, he played his old part of Fondlewife at a benefit for Chetwood, then imprisoned in the King's Bench. Poor Jenny Cibber had made a bad match of it when she insisted on marrying this gentleman!

The reappearance to which Walpole referred was at Covent Garden. There Cibber acted again in 1743-4, with Garrick, whom he never admired and to whom he was almost persistently rude. To the end of his life Cibber remained the man of narrow outlook, though he moved in so wide a sphere.

Garrick once asked the veteran if he had not still a few unpublished comedies of his own, adding that if so he would like to have the honour of producing them.

"Who would you have act?" asked Cibber warily.

Garrick named the leading lights in the theatrical firmament of that time.

"Clive and Pritchard,"¹ he suggested, "—and myself——"

¹ Johnson, when Mrs Siddons went to tea with him, gave her his opinion of these two actresses. "What Clive did best," he said, "she did better than Garrick. She was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature. Pritchard, in common life, was a vulgar idiot, she would talk of her *gown*, but, when she appeared upon the stage, seemed to be inspired by gentility and understanding."

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But Cibber with a shrug consigned these stars to an orbit far outside any known planetary system.

"No!" he snapped. "It won't do!"

On another occasion Garrick remarked that the old style of acting would no longer please, if reproduced on the stage.

"How do you know?" demanded Cibber. "You never tried it!"

But though he always treated Garrick like a naughty schoolboy to his face, Cibber's old friend, Mrs. Bracegirdle (who lived long past the threescore years and ten of our allotted span) made him tell the truth about David at last.

"Come now, Cibber!" said she, after a burst of railing, tapping him with her fan, "come, tell me if there is not something like envy in your character of this young gentleman?" The actor who pleases everybody must be a man of merit."

Cibber took snuff, squinted a little, and smiled.

"Gad demme, Bracey!" he exclaimed. "I believe you're right. The fellow *is* clever!"¹

At seventy-four Cibber's eye for opportunity was as keen as ever. In 1745, when the activities of the Young Pretender made its political and Anti-Catholic tendencies acceptable, Cibber's *Papal Tyranny* was produced at Covent Garden, with Colley as Pandulpho.²

At the same time Shakespeare's *King John* was revived at Drury Lane, with Garrick in the title-rôle, to show the town the extent of Cibber's mutilation.

Cibber made £400 by his play and acting, which he prudently sank in an annuity.

In the past Cibber had been much praised for his acting of Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, though Genest says he "wanted that easy dignity and deportment which a man like

¹ Davies' *Life of Garrick*

² There were three generations of Cibbers acting in this play. Theophilus was the Dauphin, and his daughter Jenny, Arthur

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Wolsey, so familiar in the greater Courts of Europe, must have acquired—his grief and passion were impotent and almost farcical—his resignation and tenderness inadequate from deficiency of powers.”¹ But as Pandulpho his deportment “was as disgusting as his utterance. He affected a stately magnificent tread, a supercilious aspect, which he displayed by waving up and down a roll of parchment in his right hand. In short his whole bearing was so starchly studied that it appeared eminently insignificant and more resembling his own Lord Foppington than a great and dignified Churchman”²

Cibber’s last appearance on the stage was in this rôle, when, on February 26th, 1744-45, *Papal Tyranny* was presented for the tenth time. “It might,” wrote Victor, “very justly be called an Appearance, when his Attitudes and Conduct were all that could distinguish the Master”

He might be too old to act, but not yet was Cibber too old to admire a pretty woman when he saw her. He and Swiney used to dangle after Margaret Woffington like a couple of boys—a very harmless occupation, since both of them together could have been no more than the merest episode in that lady’s crowded hour of glorious life. Love of women had never been the predominant passion in Cibber’s own life, and his admiration for the brilliant Peg was based less on her physical than on her histrionic charms, which were not unlike those of Nance Oldfield at the zenith of her fame. In watching Mrs. Woffington—perhaps in listening to her witty, Irish talk off the stage—old Cibber sought no more than to renew his youth, in spite of Benjamin Victor’s sly hint that he felt for her something more than admiration.

“My old friend the Laureate, Cibber,” wrote Victor,³ “with whom I preserved the pleasure of a literary corre-

¹ *History of the Stage*

² Davies’ *Dramatic Miscellanies*.

³ *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*.

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spondence, did not fail to transmit me exact accounts of the surprising improvements of *Woffington*; but as that very happy, singular old Gentleman retained the Air of the Lover long after the Age of Seventy, I attributed his encomiums on this Lady's perfections in Tragedy, to the excess of his passion."

It was to Victor that Cibber wrote on November 21, 1749. . . . "As to our four theatres, which are but sparingly adorned with the wonderful, their state is this :

" I Drury Lane and Garrick bear the Bell.

" II. Rich lives, but seldom runs over.

" III. The French Theatre is tolerably French; but the French Plays I never had any great opinion of; ¹ their Comedies want Humour and their Tragedies credible Nature, that is, they are heavily romantic There was a monstrous Tumult of the Mob the first night, which seemed to threaten a total demolition; but the younger men of quality, who did not choose to be interrupted in any diversion that had the royal licence, broke their heads, kick'd, cuff'd, and turn'd them in a Lump out of the House They have acted three times since in the utmost Tranquillity, and with more applause than probably they would have met with had they at first set out with their naked merit

" IV. The Italian Burletta (which is not so well performed as last year) had but a poor house the first day, and, I believe, like a sickly Plant will die, before it takes any great Root among us.

" I don't know how it is with you, but I am tired, though still as usual

" Your Friend and humble servant,

" COLLEY CIBBER." ²

¹ This was not the insular prejudice of a man who knew no city but his own Cibber had been several times to Paris in his prime

² Victor's *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin*

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That feeling of tiredness was symptomatic. In the following year Cibber was so ill with a cold that he thought himself dying. He therefore wrote to the Duke of Grafton :

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

“ I know no nearer way of repaying your favour for these last twenty years than by recommending the bearer, Mr. Henry Jones, for the vacant laurel ; Lord Chesterfield will tell you more of him. I don't know the day of my death, but while I live, I cease not to be your Grace's etc: etc.

“ COLLEY CIBBER.”¹

But the laurel was not yet to grace another brow. Three years later we find Cibber, as sprightly as ever, writing to the Duke of Newcastle for his approval (as Lord Chamberlain) of the latest Birthday Ode

“ MY LORD ” (wrote Colley),

“ If your Grace will please to consider that a modern Poet is (except a fine Lady) the most vain animal upon earth, it will give less surprise that this Annual Ode should break in upon your privacy, with so composed an Air of Confidence to receive the Stamp of Classical merit from your Approbation. And tho' (*entre nous*) 'tis possible the world, my lord, may question whether I am so lively a Lyrist as Horace by two thousand years, yet in one material point my Poetical Duty has an advantage which his highest flights to Augustus could never arrive at—I have Truth and Fact to sweeten every breath of my Incense, and there, at least must leave him as far behind in the *Marvellous* as—as—as what?—why as the real rays of the Sun must outblaze the most glowing

¹ Henry Jones was an Irish bricklayer, so said Horace Walpole. His tragedy of *The Earl of Essex* was produced at Covent Garden in 1753. He died in extreme poverty in 1770.

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colours that poetical fiction can possibly lay upon its lustre. For as no Annals of the Augustan Age have produc'd any one period of the Roman Happiness that will stand in competition with that old England is in present possession of, I doubt the deepest critick will be puzzled, not to declare for the northern climate, unless he insists, from the meer merit of their Antiquity, that the groaning slaves of an Absolute Monarchy must have a better pretence to Happiness, than the free, laughing subjects of a limited one. And tho' we allow the laudable Augustus, to have called into his privy council men of the (then) greatest Abilities and Virtues (as an Agrippa, or a Mæcenas) descended, if you please too—Attavis Regibus—yet, as they were both but the humble servants of Arbitrary Power, it is plain, that neither of them had the Pelham principles to boast of, nor could, therefore, possibly have given equal proofs of their political integrity.

“And now, my lord, if your Grace should be curious enough to know what has drawn me into this political speculation, it is in plain simplicity only this—whenever my memory (as it often does) presents to me those younger hours, which in the summer of life I have passed in the Social Shade of your favour—it throws me allmost into a Repeated enjoyment of them, and therefore, as I have only poetical Coin to repay the Obligation, unless that will be received I must still remain, tho' in the completed eighty-second year of my second puerility

“My lord,

“Your Grace's yet insolvent,
However more Oblig'd
and Devoted, Humble Ser^t

“Nov. 9th,

“COLLEY CIBBER.”¹

1753.

A little involved, but not such a bad letter for an old

¹ *Newcastle Papers.*

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man of eighty-two; the above is written in a firm hand, with no erasures or corrections. When Cibber wrote it he was living at 20 Berkeley Square with his eldest daughter and his grandchild Betty, still active, still keenly interested in the pageant of life, still—to borrow an adjective invented by Pope to express what all other words failed to express—his *Cibberian* self. In 1755 Walpole, idly turning the pages of White's wager-book, found there a very remarkable entry which ran. "*Lord — bets Sir — that Nash outlives Cibber.*" "How odd," philosophised the diarist, "that these two old creatures, selected for their antiquity, should live to see both their wagerers put an end to their own lives!" Cibber is within a few days of eighty-four, still hearty, and clear, and well. I told him I was glad to see him look so well. 'Faith,' said he, 'it is very well that I look at all!'"

In the same year that the ubiquitous Horace noted the terms of a wager which, for White's, was nothing extraordinary, Cibber's unhappy daughter Charlotte made a last effort to win his forgiveness. On the last occasion of her visiting her father she had so annoyed him that he slammed out of the house and refused to return until she left. This time, having learnt at last to be more circumspect, Charlotte wrote a letter, and did not attempt to see him.

"To Colley Cibber Esqre, at his house in Berkeley Square,

"March 8th, 1755.

"HONOURED SIR,

"I doubt not but you are sensible I last Saturday published the first number of a Narrative of my Life, in which I made a proper concession in regard to those unhappy miscarriages which have for many years justly deprived me of a father's fondness. As I am conscious of my errors, I thought I could not be too public in suing for your blessing and pardon; and only blush to think

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my youthful follies should draw so strong a compunction on my mind in the meridian of my days, which I might so easily have avoided. Be assured, Sir, I am perfectly convinced I was more than to blame, and that the hours of anguish I have felt have bitterly repaid me for the commission of every indiscretion, which was the unhappy motive of being so many years estranged from that happiness I now, as in duty bound, most earnestly deplore.

"I shall, with your permission, Sir, send again, to know if I may be admitted to throw myself at your feet; and with sincere and filial transport, endeavour to convince you that I am,

"Honoured sir,

"Your truly penitent and dutiful
daughter,

"CHARLOTTE CHARKE."¹

The writer called again to hear the result of this moving epistle, and—received it back, in a blank sheet of paper, which, as she pitifully wrote, "might have been filled up with blessing and pardon, the only boon I hoped for, wished, or expected."

Left to himself, perhaps Cibber would have been reconciled to Charlotte. But he was ruled, in his senility, by his eldest daughter, between whom and the youngest there had ever waged bitter war. Possibly Cibber never saw Charlotte's letter. It may have been kept from him for his own good. He had suffered so much with his erring daughter and her vagaries, that her name alone was enough to throw him into transports of rage; and all knew by experience how useless it was to listen to her promises of reform. It was not in her to reform. Moreover there had to be considered the influence she might exert, consciously or not, over the two children of Theophilus, Jenny and Betty. Jenny

¹ *Autobiography of Charlotte Charke*



Colley Cibber Esq.

*Colley Cibber with a young Girl, possibly his
daughter Charlotte*

Painted by J B Van Loo engraved by E Fisher

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was married, but for pecuniary reasons was as often in her grandfather's house as in her husband's, since she could not share his lodgings in the King's Bench Prison. As for Miss Cibber, there had never been any love lost between her and Mrs. Charke. From the time when she "had no more distinguishing sense than a kitten," as Charlotte put it herself (though heaven knows when she imagined herself ever to have acquired even so much as a kitten's sense), her eldest sister had been prone to mark what she did amiss, and to magnify even her mildest peccadilloes into crimes. Charlotte, in the time-honoured fashion of disputatious sisters, made no bones about saying, in her *Autobiography*, exactly what she thought of her senior "whom age cannot exempt from being the lively limmer of her own face which she had better neglect a little, and pay part of that regard to what she ought to esteem the nobler part, and must have an existence when her painted frame is reduced to ashes."¹

But Colley Cibber was soon to pass beyond these warring voices. Already the curtain was creaking down upon the long serio-comedy of his life.

At about six on the morning of December 11th, 1757, the Laureate's servant looked in upon him, and, finding him awake, and in his usual health, chatted awhile with him. At nine o'clock, returning with the old man's chocolate, the servant found Cibber lying just as he had left him, apparently asleep. He touched the withered hand. There was no response. Alarmed, the man tried to rouse his master, but all his efforts were in vain.

Cibber had answered his last call

¹ *Narrative of the Life of Charlotte Charke*

EPILOGUE

THE actor's small fortune¹ was left to his grandchildren, and his grandchildren he left as legacies to various people. One of them, Betty, who was "weak in her intellects," was apportioned to that rattlepate, Miss George Anne Bellamy, or so she stated in her *Apology for her Life*, which, published in 1785, is even more vivacious than Cibber's, though less to be relied on, for George Anne early waved her white hands to Truth and clasped to her bosom Romance. As a contemporary wrote of her: "The lady's powers of fiction are extremely vigorous." Probably her charge of Betty was apochryphal. One can hardly believe that even Cibber the careless and indifferent could have been so callously indifferent or careless as to entrust an idiot to Miss Bellamy's tender care.

Charlotte Charke and her brother Theophilus both survived their father but a little while. She died in 1760 and he in 1758.

¹ As Cibber sank most of his capital in an annuity this cannot have been considerable. He made £1500 by his *Apology*. In a memorandum book of the Lintots, unearthed by the indefatigable Isaac D'Israeli, were certain references to sums paid for copyright of the works of several authors, among them, Cibber, to whom the publishers paid

			£	s	d
1701	Nov 8	<i>A Third of Love's Last Shift</i>	3	4	6
1705	" 14	<i>Perolla and Izadora</i>	36	11	0
1707	Oct 17	<i>Double Gallant</i>	16	2	6
	Nov 22	<i>Lady's Last Stake</i>	32	5	0
	Feb 26	<i>Venus and Adonis</i>	5	7	6
1708	Oct 9	<i>Comical Lovers</i>	10	15	0
1718		<i>The Nonjuror</i>	105	0	0

Epilogue

Dr. Doran, who seldom erred, said that Cibber was buried "with kings and heroes in Westminster Abbey."

This was not the case. The actor's body was laid to rest in the family vault at the old Danish Church, Wellclose Square, East London, where, beneath a monument raised by his own hands to the memory of his wife, Caius Gabriel Cibber had been buried in 1700.

The Danish Church was built by Caius Gabriel, at the expense of King Christian V, for the use of Danish merchants and sailors in London, and what more natural than that he and his son should there be buried?

But the old church passed through many vicissitudes which culminated in the sale of the lease and buildings to the Bishop of London's Fund in 1868. In the same year the ground and building was transferred to the trustees of St. Paul's, Dock Street, E. London, who pulled the church down and erected parochial schools in its place. Four beautiful figures from the altar, the work of Caius Gabriel Cibber, were then removed to the Danish Church Seamen's Mission Church in Poplar;¹ but the marble monument above the Cibber vault was cast aside in a mason's yard in the Mile End Road, and has since completely vanished.²

Nevertheless, the mortal dust of Colley, and his father and mother, remains in Wellclose Square. The coffins, on the demolition of the church, were carefully removed under the superintendence of the then Vicar of St. Paul's,

¹ Harald Faber's *Work of C. G. Cibber*

² "So scant consideration was paid by the Danish Trustees of the church to the memory of Cibber, his wife, and his celebrated son Colley, who are all buried there, that nothing was preserved of their memorial tablets, that not even the marble monument that Cibber had placed over the tomb of his wife, Jane Cibber, was considered worth saving, while his three lead figures on the west front of the church were sold by auction together with the lead roof"—Harald Faber's *Caius Gabriel Cibber*, a beautiful and valuable addition to *Cibberana*

Epilogue

Mr. Greatorrex, and the Danish Consul to a vault under the apse, now covered by the present school buildings. In a note to Mr. Lowe, the Vicar said that all the coffins had perished save the bottoms, which he personally removed and covered with earth. The vault was closed by an Order in Council in 1868.

So, Mr. Cibber, I take my leave of you, with some respect. Despite 'your execrable Odes, you had in you a certain music it were a pity the world should quite forget.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A RICH'S STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

„ B PARTS TAKEN BY CIBBER

„ C BIRTHDAY ODE

„ D CHRONOLOGY OF CIBBER'S LITERARY WORKS

„ E THE CARELESS HUSBAND

„ F THE TRYAL OF COLLEY CIBBER (extracts from)

APPENDIX A

(Reprinted in the Eccentricities of John Edwin, 1701.)

Advertisement concerning the poor Actors, who, under pretence of hard usage from the Patentees, are about to desert their Service.

Some persons having industriously spread about among the Quality and others, what small allowances the chief Actors have had this last Winter from the Patentees of Drury Lane Play-house, as if they had received no more than so many poor palatines, it was thought necessary to print the following account.

The whole company began to act on the 12th of October, 1708, and left off on the 26th of the same month, by reason of Prince George's illness and death; and began again the 14th of December following, and left off upon the Lord Chamberlain's order on the 4th of June last, 1709. So acted, during that time, in all 135 days, which is 22 weeks and three days, accounting six acting days to a week.

	In that time	£	s.	d.
To Mr. Wilks by salary, for acting and taking care of the rehearsals, paid	168	6	8
By his Benefit play	90	14	9
		<hr/>		
Total	.	259	1	5

To Mr. Betterton by salary for acting, £4 a week for himself and £1 for his wife, although she does not act, paid 112 10 0

Appendix A

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	112	10	0
By a benefit at common prices, besides what he got by high prices, and Guineas, paid	76	4	5
Total	188	14	5
To Mr. Estcourt, at £5 a week salary, paid	112	10	0
By a Benefit, paid	51	8	6
Total	163	18	6
To Mr. Cibber, at £5 a week salary, paid	111	10	0
By a benefit, paid	51	0	10
Total	162	10	10
To Mr Mills at £4 a week for himself, and £1 for his wife, for little or nothing, paid .	112	10	10
By a benefit paid to him (not including what therein she got by a benefit play)	58	1	4
Total .	170	11	4

To Mrs. Oldfield, at £4 a week salary, which for 14 weeks and one day, she leaving off acting presently after her benefit (viz) on the 17th of March last 1708, though the benefit was intended for the whole nine months acting, and she refused to assist others in the benefits, her salary for these 14 weeks and one day came to, and she was paid

56 13 4

In January she required, and was paid ten guineas, to wear on the stage in some plays, during the whole season, a mantua petticoat

Rich's Statement of Accounts

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward . . .	56	13	4
that was given her for the stage, and though she left off three months before she should, yet she hath not returned any part of the ten guineas	10	15	0
And she had for wearing in some plays a suit of boys clothes on the stage, paid . . .	2	10	9
By a benefit, paid	62	7	8
	<hr/>		
Total	132	6	7
Certainties in all	£1077	3	8

Besides which sums above mentioned, the same actors got by their benefit plays as follows :

Note, that Mr Betterton had £76 4s 5d. as above mentioned, for two thirds of the profits by a benefit play, reckoning his tickets for the boxes at 5s apiece, the pit at 3s. the first gallery 2s and the upper gallery at 1s — But the boxes, pit and stage, laid together on his day, and no person admitted but by his tickets, the lowest at half a guinea a ticket, nay, he had much more, for one lady gave him ten guineas, some five, some two guineas, and most one guinea, supposing that he desired not to act any more, and he delivered tickets out for more persons, than the boxes, pit, and stage could hold, it is thought he cleared at least £450 over and besides the £76 4s 5d. 450 0

'Tis thought Mr. Estcourt cleared £200 besides the said £51 8s. 6d 200 0

That Mr Wilks cleared by Guineas, as it is thought, about £40 besides the said £90 14s. 9d. 40 0

Appendix A

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	690	0	0
That Mr. Cibber got by Guineas as 'it is thought, about £50 besides the said £51 os. 10d.	50	0	0
That Mr. Mills got by guineas about £20, as it is thought, besides the said £58 1s. 4d. . .	20	0	0
That Mrs. Oldfield, it is thought, got £120 by guineas over and above the said £62 7s. 8d.	120	0	0
In all	880	0	0

So that these six comedians, who are the unsatisfied people, have between the 12th of October and the 4th of June last, cleared in all the following sums :

Acted 16 times, Mr. Wilks certain	259	1	5
and more by computation	40	0	0
Both	299	1	5
Acted 16 times, Mr. Betterton certain	188	14	5
and more by computation	450	0	0
	638	14	5
Acted 52 times, Mr. Estcourt certain	163	18	6
and more by computation	200	0	0
	363	18	6
Acted 71 times, Mr. Cibber certain	162	10	10
and more by computation	50	0	0
	212	10	10

Rich's Statement of Accounts

	£	s.	d.
Acted — times, Mr. Mills certain .	170	11	4
and more by computation . . .	20	0	0
	<hr/>		
	190	11	4
Acted 39 times, Mrs Oldfield certain .	132	6	7
and more by computation .	120	0	3
	<hr/>		
	252	6	10
In all .	£1957	3	2

Had not acting been forbid seven weeks on the occasion of Prince George's death, and my Lord Chamberlain forbid acting about five weeks before the tenth of July instant; each of these comedians would have had twelve weeks salary more than is above mentioned

As to the certainties expressed in this paper to be paid to the six actors, the same are positively true, and as to the sums they got over and above such certainties, I believe the same to be true, according to the best of my computation.

Witness my hand, who am Receiver and Treasurer at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

ZACHARY BAGGS.

July 8th, 1709.

APPENDIX B

Parts taken by Cibber (as given by Genest and Davies) ¹

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Rôle</i>	<i>Play</i>
1691.	Sir Gentle's Servant. Sigismond.	Sir Anthony Love. Alphonso, King of Naples
	Pyrott.	Bussy D'Ambois.
1692.	Albimer Splutter.	The Rape. The Marriage-Hater Match'd
	Pisano.	The Traitor.
1693.	Aminadab.	The Very Good Wife
1694.	Perez (a curate). Duke	Don Quixote, Part I " " " II.
1695.	Fondlewife Pharamond	The Old Batchelor. Philaster
1695-6.	Sir Novelty Fashion.	Love's Last Shift
1696.	Lorenzo. Smyrna.	Agnes de Castro The Lost Lover, or the Jealous Husband.
	Artabazus.	Pausanias.
1697.	Lord Foppington. Praiseall Antonio. Longville Bull Junior.	The Relapse Female Wits. Triumphs of Virtue. Woman's Wit Plot and No Plot.

¹ When double dates are given, as 1703-4, the first date = the English legal year ending on March 24th, and the second the Julian year, ending Dec 31st. The New Style was not adopted in England until 1752

Parts Taken by Cibber

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Rôle.</i>	<i>Play.</i>
1697.	Æsop. Demetrius.	Æsop. The Humorous Lieutenant.
	Careless.	The Sham Lawyer.
1698.	Bertran.	Campaigners. ¹
	Bond.	Imposture Defeated.
1699.	Ulysses and Calchas.	Iphigenia in Aulis. ²
1700.	Mad Englishman } Stuttering Cook. }	The Pilgrim.
	Parmenio.	Love's Paradise.
	Richard.	Richard III. ³
1701	Clodio.	The Fop's Fortune. ⁴
	Marquis.	Sir Harry Wildair.
	Crab.	The Bath.
1702.	Malespine.	The Generous Conqueror
	Lord Promise	The Modish Husband
	Don John	The False Friend.
	Lord Hardy	Grief à la Mode
	Don Manuel	She wou'd and she wou'd not.
	Young Wou'd Be	Twin Rivals.
	Schoolboy.	The Schoolboy.
1703	Tom Pistole.	The Old Mode and the New.
	Spring Love.	Fair Example.
	1st Alderman's Lady.	City Customs.
1703-4	Sir Courtly Nice	Sir Courtly Nice, or It Cannot Be.
	Latine.	The Lying Lover.
1704-5.	Lord Foppington.	Careless Husband.

¹ In the Epilogue Cibber mimicked the French Singers at the rival house

² Boyer

³ *As mangled by himself*, sourly comments Genest

⁴ Adapted by Cibber from Beaumont and Fletcher.

Appendix B

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Rôle.</i>	<i>Play.</i>
1704-5.	Howdee.	The Northern Lass.
	Dr. Refugee.	The Quacks.
	Wimble.	Squire Trelooby.
1705-6.	Lampoon.	Hampstead Heath.
	Pacuvius.	Perollo and Izadora.
	Captain Brazen.	The Recruiting Officer.
1706-7.	Sir Fopling Flutter.	Man of the Mode.
	Sharper.	The Platonic Lady.
	Corvino.	Volpone.
	Humphrey Gubbin.	Tender Husband
	Sir John Daw.	Silent Woman.
	Celadon.	Comical Lovers.
	Surrey.	Henry VIII
	Chaplain.	The Orphan.
	Gibbet.	Beaux Stratagem.
	Renault.	Venice Preserved.
	Rabby Busy.	Bartholomew Fair.
	Atall.	Double Gallant.
	Worcester.	Henry IV.
	Lord George Brilliant.	Lady's Last Stake.
	Hilliard	Jovial Crew.
1708.	Osric.	Hamlet.
	Sir Roger.	The Scornful Lady.
	Trim.	Bury Fair.
	Young Reveller.	Greenwich Park.
	Frederick	The Rover
1708-9.	Volcius.	The Rehearsal
	Gloster.	King Lear.
	Cranmer.	Henry VIII.
	Glendower.	Henry IV.
	Subtle.	The Alchemist.
	Nicknack.	Fine Lady's AIRS
	Cogdie.	The Gamester.
	Iago. ¹	Othello.

¹ In which part he was hussed off the stage.

Parts Taken by Cibber

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Rôle.</i>	<i>Play.</i>
1708-9.	Sparkish.	Country Wife.
1709-10.	Tattle.	
	Burleigh.	Unhappy Favourite.
	Manage.	The Man's Bewitched.
1710-11.	Kick.	Epsom Wells.
	Captain Cruise	Injured Love.
1711-12.	Riot.	Wife's Relief.
	Wolsey.	Virtue Betrayed.
1712-13.	Major Outside.	Humours of the Army.
	Syphax.	
1713-14.	Gloster.	Jane Shore.
1714-15.	Bishop of Winchester.	Lady Jane Grey.
1715-16.	Tinsel.	Drummer.
1716-17.	Barnaby Brittle.	The Amorous Widow.
	Plotwell.	Three Hours After Marriage.
	Bayes	The Rehearsal.
1717-18.	Dr. Wolf.	The Nonjuror.
	Witwou'd	
	Peter Pirate	The Play's the Plot.
1718-19.	Don Alvarez.	Ximena.
	Alexis.	All For Love.
	Alamode.	Chit Chat.
	1st and 2nd Figure.	Masquerade.
1719-20.	Crites.	The Spartan Dame.
1720-21.	Dufoy.	Comical Revenge.
	Abel.	Committee.
	Shallow.	Henry IV.
	Wilding.	The Refusal.
1721-22.		No new character.
1722-23.	Tom.	The Conscious Lovers.
	Jaques.	Love in a Forest. ¹

¹ Adapted from *As You Like It*.

Appendix B—Parts Taken by Cibber

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Rôle.</i>	<i>Play.</i>
1722-23.	Cardinal Beaufort.	Humphrey Duke of Gloucester.
	Tryphon.	Fatal Constancy.
	Novel.	Plain Dealer.
1723-24.	Wolsey.	Henry VIII.
1724-25.	Anchoreus.	Cæsar in Ægypt.
1725-26.	Trueman	Twin Rivals.
	Sir John Brute.	The Provoked Wife.
1726-27.	Earl of Late-Airs.	Rival Modes.
1727-28.	Sir Francis Wronghead.	
	Rattle.	Love in Seven Masques.
1728-29.	Philautus.	Love in a Riddle
1729-30.	Ape-all.	Humours of Oxford.
	Scipio ¹	Sophonisba.
1730-31.	No new character	
1731-32.	Grinley.	The Modish Couple
	Lord Richley.	Modern Husband
1732-33.	No new character	
<i>Cibber retired at the end of this season.</i>		

¹ Hissed.

APPENDIX C

An Ode for His Majesty's Birthday, by Mr. Cibber,
servant to His Majesty.

October 30, 1731.

(Price Sixpence) *

When Charles, from Anarchy's Retreat
Resumed the Regal Seat,
When (hence by frantic Zealots driven)
Our holy Church, our Laws,
Returning with the Royal Cause,
Raised up their thankful Eyes to Heaven

Then Hand in Hand,
To bless the Land,
Protection with Obedience came,
And mild Oblivion wav'd Revenge,
For Wrongs of Civil Flame.

*Wild, and wanton, then, our Joys,
Loud as raging War before
All was Triumph, tuneful Noise,
None, from Heaven, could hope for more*

*Brother, Son, and Father Foes,
Now embracing, bless their Home :
Who so happy, could suppose
Happier days were still to come ?*

Appendix C

But Providence, that better knows
Our Wants, than we,
Previous to those,
(Which human Wisdom could not, then, foresee)
Did, from the pregnant former Day
A Race of Happier reigns to come, convey.

The Sun¹ we saw precede,
Those mighty joys restored,
Gave to our future Need,
From great PLANTAGENET a Lord.
From whose high Veins this greater day arose,
A second GEORGE, to fix our World's Repose.
From CHARLES restored, short was our Term of Bliss,
But GEORGE from GEORGE entails our Happiness.

*From a heart that abhors the Abuse of high Pow'r
Are our Liberties duly defended,*

*From a Courage, inflam'd by the Terrors of War,
With his Fame, is our Commerce extended*

*Let our publick high spirits be raised to their Height,
Yet our Prince, in that Virtue, will lead 'em.*

*From our Welfare, he knows, that his Glory's more bright,
As Obedience enlarges our Freedom.*

What ties can bind a grateful People more,
Than such diffus'd Benevolence of Pow'r ?

*If private Views could more prevail,
Than Ardour, for the Publick Weal,
Then had his native, Martial Heat,
In Arms seduc'd him, to be Great.*

*But Godlike Virtue, more inclin'd
To save than to destroy,
Deems it inferior joy,
To lead, in Chains of Peace, the Mind.*

¹ George I, born May 28, 1660

Birthday Ode

With song, ye BRITONS, lead the Day !
Sing ! sing the Morn, that gave him Breath,
Whose Virtues never shall decay,
No, never, never, taste of Death.

CHORUS.

*When Tombs and Trophies shall be Dust,
Fame shall preserve the Great and Just.*

APPENDIX D

Chronology of Cibber's literary works.

(Compiled from the *Biographia Dramatica*, Genest, and the British Museum Catalogue Works other than plays marked †. Operas * D.L. = Drury Lane. L I.F. = Lincoln's Inn Fields. H = Haymarket. C G. = Covent Garden.)

	<i>Pub</i>	<i>Produced at</i>
Love's Last Shift	1695.	1696 D L.
Woman's Wit	1697	1697. D L.
Xerxes	1699.	1699. L I.F.
Richard III	1700	1700. D.L.
Love Makes a Nian	1701	1701 D L
She wou'd and she wou'd not ¹	1703.	1702 D L.
The Careless Husband . .	1704	1704. D L
Perolla and Izadora . . .	1706.	1705 D L.
The Double Gallant	1707.	1707 H
The Comical Lovers	1707	1707 H.
The Schoolboy	1707	1702 D L.
The Lady's Last Stake	1708	1708 H
The Rival Fools	1709	1709 D L.
Venus and Adonis (a masque) .	1715	1715. D L.
Myrtello (a pastoral interlude) .	1715	1716 D L.
Hob, or the Country Wake . .	1715.	
The Non-Juror	1718	1717. D.L.
Ximena	1719	1712. D L
The Refusal	1721	1721 D L.
Cæsar in Ægypt	1725	1724 D L.

¹ Revived in London and New York by Augustin Daly, with Ada Rehan as Hypolita

Chronology of Cibber's Literary Works

	<i>Pub.</i>	<i>Produced at</i>
The Provoked Husband (with Vanbrugh)	1728.	1728. D L.
The Rival Queens	1729.	1710. H.
*Love in a Riddle	1729	1729. D.L.
*Damon and Phillida	1729	1729. H.
†The Apology	1740	
†The Character and Conduct of Cicero	1745	
Papal Tyranny	1745	1745. C G
The Lady's Lecture (a dialogue)	1748.	

In 1721 Cibber published a sumptuous edition of his works in Quarto, from which he excluded two or three of his worst plays. (Genest)

APPENDIX E

The Careless Husband: A Comedy

THE
Careless Husband.
A
COMEDY.

As it is ACTED at the
THEATRE ROYAL,
BY
Her MAJESTY's Servants.

Written by C. CIBBER.

*Yet none Sir Fopling Him, or Him can call,
He's Knight o' th' Shire, and Represents you all.*

Qui capit, ille Facit.

ProL to Sir Fop.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N

Printed for W. Davis, at the Black Bull near the Royal
Exchange in Cornhill. 1705.



Not Acted these SIX YEARS.

AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL

IN COVENT-GARDEN,

To-morrow, being *Tuesday* the 7th of *January*,

Will be Received COMPLETLY, and

The Careless Husband.

Sir Charles Easy by Mr. SHERIDAN,

Lord Foppington by Mr. CIBBER,

Lord Alrevel by Mr. RIDOUT,

Lady Easy by Mrs. F L M Y,

My Betty and *Is*, Mrs WOFFINGTON

Lady Grace by Mrs. HAMILTON,

Edging by Mrs. G R E E N.

*With Entertainments as will be express'd in
the Bills of the Day*

Boxes 5s Pit 1s First Gallery 2s Upper Gallery 1s

To begin exactly at Six o'Clock

Great R R X

n C. 66 c1 50

Playbill of "The Careless Husband"

To the most illustrious
JOHN, Duke of
ARGYLE.

This Play, at last, through many Difficulties, has made its way to throw itself at your Grace's Feet, And considering what well-meant Attempts were made to intercept it in its Course to so great an Honour, I have had Reason not to think it entirely successful, till (where my Ambition always designed it) I found it safe in your Protection. Which, when several Means had fail'd of making it less worthy of, the Spleen ended with the Old Good-Nature that was offer'd to my first Play, viz that it was none of my own; but that's a Praise I have indeed some Reason to be proud of, since your Grace from evincing circumstances is able to divide the Malice from the Compliment.

The best Criticks have long and justly complain'd that the Coarseness of most Characters in our late Comedies, have been unfit Entertainments for People of Quality, especially the Ladies. And therefore I was long in hopes that some able Pen (whose Expectations did not hang upon the Profits of Success) wou'd generously attempt to reform the Town into a better Taste than the World generally allows 'em: but nothing of that kind having lately appear'd, that would give me an Opportunity of being wise at another's Expense, I found it impossible any longer to resist the secret Temptation of my Vanity, and so even struck the first Blow myself: and the Event

Appendix E

has now convinc'd me, that whoever sticks closely to Nature, can't easily write above the Understanding of the Galleries, tho' at the same Time he may possibly deserve Applause of the Boxes.

This Play, before its Tryal on the Stage, was examin'd by several People of Quality, that came into your Grace's Opinion of its being a just, a proper, and diverting Attempt in Comedy; but few of 'em carried the Compliment beyond their private Approbation, for when I was wishing for a little farther Hope, they stop short of your Grace's Penetration, and only kindly wish me what they seem'd to fear, and you assur'd me of, a General Success.

But your Grace has been pleas'd, not only to encourage me with your Judgment, but have likewise, by your favourable Influence in the Bounties that were rais'd for me the Third and Sixth Day, defended me against any Hazards of an entire Disappointment from so bold an Undertaking: and therefore, whatever the World may think of me, as one they call a Poet, yet I am confident, as your Grace understands me, I shall not want your Belief, when I assure you that this Dedication is the Result of a profound Acknowledgment, an Artless Inclination, proudly Glad and Grateful

And if the Dialogue of the following Scenes flows with more easy turn of Thought and Spirit than what I have usually produc'd; I shall not yet blame some People for saying 'tis not my own, unless they knew at the same time I owe most of it to the many stolen Observations I have made from your Grace's Manner of Conversing.

And if ever the Influence of your Grace's more shining Qualities should persuade me to attempt a *Tragedy*, I shall then, with the same Freedom, borrow all the Ornamental Virtues of my Hero, where now I am indebted for part of the Fine Gentleman. Greatness of Birth and Mind, Sweetness of Temper, flowing from the fixt and native Principles of Courage and Honour, are Beauties that I

The Careless Husband

reserve for a farther Opportunity of expressing the Zeal
and Gratitude of

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient

Most oblig'd and Humble Servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

Dec. 15,

1704

THE PROLOGUE.

Of all the various Vices of the Age,
And Shoals of Fools expos'd upon the Stage,
How few are lasht that call for Sature's Rage!
What can you think to see our Plays so full
Of Madmen, Coxcombs, and the driveling Fool?
Of Cits, of Sharpers, Rakes, and roaring Bullies,
Of Cheats, of Cuckolds, Aldermen and Cullies?
Wou'd not one swear, 'twere taken for a Rule,
That Sature's Rod in the Dramatick School,
Was only meant for the incorrigible Fool?
As if too Vice and Folly were confin'd
To the vile Scum alone of human Kind,
Creatures a Muse should scorn such abject Trash
Deserves not Satire's but the Hangman's Lash
Wretches so far shut out from Sense of Shame,
NEWGATE or BEDLAM only shou'd reclaim,
For Satire ne'er was meant to make wild Monsters tame.
No, Sirs——
We'd rather think the Persons fit for Plays,
Are they whose Birth and Education says,
They've every Help that should improve Mankind,
Yet still live Slaves to a vile tainted Mind,
Such as in Wit are often seen t'abound,
And yet have some weak Part, where Folly's found
For Follies sprout like Weeds, highest in fruitful Ground
And 'tis observed, the Garden of the Mind
To no infestive Weed's so much inclin'd,
As the rank Pride that some from Affectation find.
A Folly too well known to make it's Court
With most Success among the better Sort
Such are the Persons we to-day provide,
And Nature's Fools for once are laid aside
This is the Ground on which our Play we build.
But in the Structure must to Judgment yield
And where the Poet fails in Art, or Care,
We beg your wonted Mercy to the Player.

THE PERSONS.

Lord Morelove,
Lord Foppington,
Sir *Charles Easy*,

Mr. *Powel*.
Mr. *Cibber*.
Mr *Wilks*

Lady *Betty Modish*,
Lady Easy,
Lady Graveairs,
Mrs. *Edging*, woman to Lady Easy,

Mrs *Oldfield*
Mrs *Knight*.
Mrs *Mosse*
Mrs *Lucas*

The Scene Windsor

ACT ONE. SCENE I.

SCENE. *Sir CHARLES EASY'S Lodgings.*

Enter Lady EASY alone.

L. Easy. Was ever Woman's Spirit, by an injurious Husband, broke like mine? A vile, licentious Man! must he bring home his Follies too? Wrong me with my very Servant? O! how tedious a Relief is Patience! and yet in my Condition 'tis the only Remedy: for to reproach him with my Wrongs is taking on myself the Means of a Redress, bidding Defiance to his Falsehood, and naturally but provokes him to undo me. The uneasy Thought of my continual Jealousy, may tease him to a fixt Aversion, and hitherto, tho' he neglects me, I cannot think he hates me—It must be so, since I want Power to please him, he never shall upbraid me with an Attempt of making him uneasy—My Eyes and Tongue shall yet be blind and silent to my Wrongs; nor would I have him think my Virtue could suspect him, 'till by some gross apparent Proof of his Misdoing, he forces me to see—and to forgive it.

Enter EDGING hastily.

Edg. O Madam!

L. Easy. What's the matter?

Edg. I have the strangest thing to show your Ladyship—such a Discovery——

L. Easy. You are resolved to make it without much Ceremony, I find, what's the Business, pray?

Edg. The Business, Madam. I have not Patience

Appendix E

to tell you, I am out of breath at the very Thoughts on't, I shall not be able to speak this half hour.

L. Easy. Not to the Purpose, I believe! But methinks you talk impertinently with a great deal of Ease.

Edg. Nay, Madam, perhaps 'twere not so impertinent as your Ladyship thinks; there's that will speak to Purpose, I am sure—A base Man—[*Gives a Letter.*]

L. Easy. What's this, an open Letter? Whence comes it?

Edg. Nay, read it, Madam, you'll soon guess.—If these are the Tricks of Husbands, keep me a Maid still, say I.

L. Easy. [*Looking on the Superscription.*] To Sir Charles Easy! Ha! Too well I know this hateful Hand—O my Heart! But I must veil my Jealousy, which 'tis not fit this Creature should suppose I am acquainted with [*aside*].—This Direction is to your Master, how came you by it?

Edg. Why, Madam, as my Master was lying down, after he came in from Hunting, he sent me into his Dressing-room to fetch his Snuff-box out of his Waist-coat-Pocket, and so as I was searching for the Box, Madam, there I found this wicked Letter from a Mistress: which I had no sooner read, but, I declare, my very Blood rose at him again, methought I could have torn him and her to Pieces

L. Easy. Intolerable! This odious Thing's jealous of him herself, and wants me to join with her in a Revenge upon him—Sure, I am fallen indeed! But 'twere to make me lower yet, to let her think I understand her. [*Aside*]

Edg. Nay, pray, Madam, read it, you'll be out of Patience at it.

L. Easy. You are bold, Mistress, has my Indulgence or your Master's good Humour, flatter'd you into the Assurance of reading his Letters? a Liberty I never gave myself—Here—lay it where you had it immediately—

The Careless Husband

should he know of your Sauciness, 'twould not be my Favour could Protect you. [Exit Lady Easy.]

Edg. Your Favour! Marry come up! Sure, I don't depend upon your Favour—'tis not come to that, I hope—Poor Creature—don't you think I am my Master's Mistress for nothing—you shall find, Madam, I won't be snapt up as I have been—Not but it vexes me, to think he should not be as uneasy as I. I am sure he is a base Man to me, and I could cry my Eyes out that she should not think him as bad to her every Jot. If I am wrong'd, sure she may well expect it, that is but his Wife—A conceited Thing—she need not be so easy, neither—I am as handsome as she I hope—Here's my Master—I'll try whether I am to be huff'd by her, or no [Walks behind.]

Enter Sir CHARLES EASY.

Sir Cha. So! The Day is come again—Life but rises to another Stage, and the same dull Journey is before us How like Children do we judge of Happiness! When I was stinted in my Fortune, almost everything was a Pleasure to me, because most things then being out of my Reach, I always had the Pleasure of hoping for 'em; now Fortune's in my Hand, she's as insipid as an old Acquaintance—It's mighty silly, Faith—Just the same Thing by my Wife too, I'm told she's extremely handsome—nay, and have heard a great many People say she is certainly the best Woman in the World—why, I don't know, but she may, yet I never could find that her Person or good Qualities gave me any Concern—In my Eye, the Woman has no more Charms than my Mother

Edg. Hum!—he takes no Notice of me yet—I'll let him see I can take as little Notice of him. [She walks by him gravely, he turns her about and holds her, she struggles] Pray, Sir.

Sir Cha. A pretty pert Air that—I'll humour it—

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What's the matter, Child? Are you not well? Kiss me, Hussy!

Edg. No. The Deuce fetch me, if I do.

Sir Cha. Has anything put thee out of Humour, Love?

Edg. No, Sir, 'tis not worth my being out of Humour at—tho' if ever you have anything to say to me again, I'll be burn'd.

Sir Cha. Somebody has bely'd me to thee.

Edg. No, Sir, 'tis you have bely'd yourself to me—did I not ask you, when you first made a Fool of me, if you would be always constant to me, and did you not say I might be sure you would? And here, instead of that, you are going on in your old Intrigue with my Lady Graveairs—

Sir Cha. So—

Edg. Beside, don't you suffer my Lady to huff me every Day as if I were her Dog, or had no more Concern with you—I declare I won't bear it, and she shan't think to huff me—for ought I know I am as agreeable as she; and tho' she dares not take any Notice of your Baseness to her you shan't think to use me so—and so pray take your nasty Letter—I know the Hand well enough—for my Part, I won't stay in the Family to be abus'd at this Rate; I that have refus'd Lords and Dukes for your Sake; I'd have you to know, Sir, I have had as many blue and green Ribands after me, for ought I know, as would have made me a Falbala Apron.

Sir Cha. My Lady *Graveairs*! my nasty Letter! and I won't stay in the Family! Death!—I'm in a pretty Condition—What an unlimited Privilege has this Jade got from being a Whore!

Edg. I suppose, Sir, you think to use everybody as you do your Wife.

Sir Cha. My Wife! Ha! Come hither, Mrs. *Edging*; hark you, Drab. [*Seizing her by the shoulder.*]

Edg. Oh!

The Careless Husband

Sir Cha. When you speak of my Wife, you are to say your Lady, and you are never to speak of your Lady to me in any regard of her being my Wife—for look you, Child, you are not her Strumpet, but mine, therefore I only give you leave to be saucy with me—In the next place, you are never to suppose there is any such Person as my Lady *Graveairs*; and lastly, my pretty one, how came you by this letter?

Edg. It's no matter, perhaps.

Sir Cha. Ay, but if you should not tell me quickly, how are you sure I won't take a great Piece of Flesh out of your Shoulder?—My Dear. [*Shakes her*]

Edg. O lud! O lud! I will tell you, Sir.

Sir Cha. Quickly, then—[*again*]

Edg. Oh! I took it out of your Pocket, Sir.

Sir Cha. When?

Edg. Oh! This Morning when you sent me for your Snuff-box.

Sir Cha. And your Ladyship's pretty Curiosity has look'd it over, I presume—ha——[*again*]

Edg. O lud! dear Sir, don't be angry—indeed I'll never touch one again.

Sir Cha. I don't believe you will, and I'll tell you how you shall be sure you never will.

Edg. Yes, Sir.

Sir Cha. By steadfastly believing, that the next time you offer it, you will have your pretty white Neck twisted behind you

Edg. Yes, Sir [*Curtseying*]

Sir Cha. And you are sure to remember everything I have said to you?

Edg. Yes, Sir.

Sir Cha. And now, Child, I was not angry with your Person, but your Follies, which, since I find you are a little sensible of—don't be wholly discouraged—for I believe I—I shall have Occasion for you again.

Edg. Yes, Sir.

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Sir Cha. In the mean time let me hear no more of your Lady, Child.

Edg. No, Sir.

Sir Cha. Here she comes, begone.

Edg. Yes, Sir—Oh, I was never so frightened in my Life. [Exit.]

Sir Cha. So! Good Discipline makes good Soldiers—It often puzzles me to think, from my own Carelessness, and my Wife's continual good Humour, whether she really knows anything of the Strength of my Forces—I'll sift her a little.

[Enter Lady EASY]

My Dear, how do you do? You are dressed very early to-day, are you going out?

L. Easy. Only to Church, my Dear.

Sir Cha. Is it so late then?

L. Easy. The Bell has just rung

Sir Cha. Well, Child, how does *Windsor Air* agree with you? Do you find yourself any better yet? or have you a mind to go to *London* again?

L. Easy. No, indeed, my Dear, the Air's so very pleasant, that if it were a Place of less Company, I could be content to end my Days here

Sir Cha. Pr'ythee, my Dear, what sort of Company would most please you?

L. Easy. When Business would permit it, yours: and in your Absence, a sincere Friend that were truly happy in an honest Husband, to fit a cheerful Hour, and talk in mutual Praise of our Condition.

Sir Cha. Are you then really very happy, my Dear?

L. Easy. Why should you question it? [Smiling on him.]

Sir Cha. Because I fancy I am not so good to you as I should be.

L. Easy. Pshah!

Sir Cha. Nay, the Deuce take me if I don't really

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confess myself so bad, that I've often wondered how any Woman of your Sense, Rank, and Person, could think it worth her while to have so many useless good Qualities.

L. Easy. Fy, my Dear.

Sir Cha. By my Soul, I'm serious.

L. Easy. I can't boast of my good Qualities, nor if I could, do I believe you'd think 'em useless.

Sir Cha. Nay, I submit to you—Don't you find 'em so? Do you perceive that I am one Tittle the better Husband for your being so good a Wife?

L. Easy. Pshah! You jest with me.

Sir Cha. Upon my Life, I don't—Tëll me truly, were you never jealous of me?

L. Easy. Did I ever give you any Sign of it?

Sir Cha. Um—that's true—but do you really think I never gave you Occasion?

L. Easy. That's an odd Question—but suppose you had?

Sir Cha. Why then, what good has your Virtue done you, since all the good Qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?

L. Easy. What Occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?

Sir Cha. I given you Occasion—Fy! my Dear—you may be sure—I—look you, that is not the thing, but still a—(Death! what a Blunder have I made)—a still, I say, Madam, you shan't make me believe you have never been jealous of me; not that you ever had any real Cause, but I know Women of your Principles have more Pride than those that have no Principles at all; and where there is Pride, my Dear, there must be some jealousy—so that if you are jealous, my Dear, you know you wrong me, and——

L. Easy. Why then, upon my Word, my Dear, I don't know that ever I wrong'd you that Way in my Life.

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Sir Cha. But suppose I had given you a real Cause to be jealous, How would you do then ?

L. Easy. It must be a very substantial one that makes me jealous.

Sir Cha. Say it were a substantial one, suppose now I were well with a Woman of your own Acquaintance, that under Pretence of frequent Visits to you, should only come to carry on an Affair with me—Suppose now, my Lady *Graveairs* and I were great—

L. Easy. Would I could not suppose it. [*Aside*]

Sir Cha. If I come off here I believe I am pretty safe [*Aside*].—Suppose, I say, my Lady and I were so very familiar that not only yourself, but half the Town should see it !

L. Easy. Then I should cry myself sick in some dark Closet, and forget my Tears when you spoke kindly to me.

Sir Cha. The most convenient Piece of Virtue sure that ever Wife was Mistress of. [*Aside.*]

L. Easy. But pray, my Dear, did you ever think that I had any ill thoughts of my Lady *Graveairs* ?

Sir Cha. O fy ! Child : only you know she and I used to be a little free sometimes, so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any Harm in it, but since I find you very easy in it, I think myself obliged to tell you that upon my Soul, my Dear, I have so little regard to her Person, that the Deuce take me, if I would not as soon have an Affair with thy Woman.

L. Easy. Indeed, my Dear, I should as soon suspect you with one as t'other

Sir Cha. Poor Dear—should'st thou ?—give me a Kiss

L. Easy. Pshah ! You don't care to kiss me !

Sir Cha. By my Soul I do—I wish I may die if I don't think you a very fine Woman

L. Easy. I only wish you'd think me a good Wife. [*Kisses her.*] But pray, my Dear, what has made you so strangely inquisitive ?

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Sir Cha. Inquisitive?—Why—a—I don't know, one's always saying one foolish Thing or another—Toll le roll. I fancy I could recover my dancing again, if I would but practise it Toll, loll, loll!

L. Easy This Excess of Carelessness to me excuses half his Vices, if I can make him once think seriously—Time yet may be my Friend.

Enter a Servant.

Serv Sir, Lord Morelove give his Service——

Sir Cha Lord Morelove? Where is he?

Serv At the Chocolate-House. He called me to him as I went by, and bid me tell your Honour he'll wait upon you presently.

L. Easy I thought you had not expected him here again this Season, my Dear.

Sir Cha I thought so too, but you see there's no depending upon the Resolution of a Man that's in Love

L. Easy Is there a Chair?

Serv. Yes, Madam [*Exit Servant*]

L. Easy I suppose Lady *Betty Modish* has drawn him hither

Sir Cha Ah, poor Soul, for all his Bravery, I am afraid so

L. Easy Well, my Dear, I han't time to ask my Lord how he does now, you'll excuse me to him, but I hope you'll make him dine with us.

Sir Cha. I'll ask him If you see Lady *Betty* at Prayers make her dine too, but don't take any Notice of my Lord's being in Town

L. Easy My Dear, your Servant. [*Exit Lady EASY*]

Sir Cha. My Dear, I'm yours. Well! one Way or other this Woman will certainly bring about her Business with me at last, for tho' she can't make me happy in her own Person, she lets me be so intolerably easy with the

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Women that can, that she has at least brought me into a fair Way of being as weary of them too.

Enter Servant and Lord Morelove.

Serv. Sir, my Lord's come.

L. Mor. Dear *Charles* !

Sir Cha My dear Lord ! This is a Happiness undreamt of. I little thought to have seen you at *Windsor* again this Season ; I concluded, of course, that Books and Solitude had secured you till Winter.

L. Mor. Nay, I did not think of coming myself, but I found myself not very well in *London*, so I thought—a little Hunting, and this Air——

Sir Cha Ha ! ha ! ha !

L. Mor. What do you laugh at ?

Sir Cha Only because you should not go on with your Story . If you did but see how silly a Man fumbles for an excuse, when he is a little ashamed of being in Love, you would not wonder what I laugh at Ha ! ha !

L. Mor Thou art a very happy Fellow—nothing touches thee—always easy—then you conclude I follow Lady *Betty* again ?

Sir Cha Yes, Faith, do I, and to make you easy, my Lord, I cannot see why a Man that can ride fifty Miles after a poor Stag should be ashamed of running twenty in Chase of a fine Woman, that in all Probability will make him so much the better Sport too. [*Embracing*]

L. Mor Dear *Charles* ! don't flatter my Distemper. I own I still follow her . Do you think her Charms have Power to excuse me to the World ?

Sir Cha Ay ! ay ! a fine Woman's an Excuse for any thing, and the Scandal of her being in Jest, is a Jest itself . We are all forced to be their Fools, before we can be their Favourites

L. Mor You are willing to give me Hope, but I can't believe she has the least Degree of Inclination for me.

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Sir Cha. I don't know that—I'm sure her Pride likes you, and that's generally your fine Lady's darling Passion.

L. Mor. Do you suppose if I could grow indifferent, it would touch her?

Sir Cha. Sting her to the Heart—Will you take my Advice?

L. Mor. I have no Relief but that. Had I not thee now and then to talk an Hour, my Life were insupportable

Sir Cha. I am sorry for that, my Lord—but mind what I say to you—but hold, first let me know the Particulars of your late Quarrel with her

L. Mor. Why—about three Weeks ago, when I was last here at *Windsor*, she had for some Days treated me with a little more Reserve, and another with more Freedom than I found myself easy at

Sir Cha. Who was that other?

L. Mor. One of my Lord *Foppington's* Gang, the pert Coxcomb that's just come to a small Estate and a great Perriwig—he that sings himself among the Women—What d'ye call him? He won't speak to a gentleman when a Lord's in Company—you always see him with a Cane dangling at his button, his breast open, no Gloves, one Eye tucked under his Hat, and a Tooth-pick—*Start-up*, that's his Name

Sir Cha. O! I have met him in a Visit—But pray go on

L. Mor. So, disputing with her about the Conduct of Women, I took the Liberty to tell her how far I thought she err'd in hers, she told me I was rude, and that she would never believe any Man could love a Woman, that thought her in the wrong in any thing she had a Mind to, at least if he dared to tell her so—This provoked me into her whole Character, with as much Spite and Civil Malice, as I had seen her bestow upon a Woman of true Beauty, when the Men first toasted her;

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so in the Middle of my Widsom, she told me that she desired to be alone, that I would take my odious, proud Heart along with me, and trouble her no more—About an Hour after, I whipped into my Chaise for *London*, and have never seen her since

Sir Cha. Very well; and how did you find your proud Heart by the Time you got to *Hounslow*?

L. Mor. I am almost ashamed to tell you—I found her so much in the Right, that I cursed my Pride for contradicting her at all, and began to think according to her Maxim, that no Woman could be in the Wrong to a Man that she had in her Power.

Sir Cha. Ha! ha! Well, I'll tell you what you shall do. You can see her without trembling, I hope?

L. Mor. Not if she receives me well.

Sir Cha. If she receives you well, you will have no Occasion for what I am going to say to you—first, you shall dine with her

L. Mor. How! Where! When!

Sir Cha. Here! Here! at two o'clock.

L. Mor. Dear *Charles*!

Sir Cha. My Wife's gone to invite her; when you see her first, be neither too humble nor too stubborn, let her see by the Ease in your Behaviour you are still pleased in being near her, while she is upon reasonable Terms with you. This will either open the Door of an *Eclaircissement*; or quite shut it against you—and if she is still resolved to keep you out——

L. Mor. Nay, if she insults me then, perhaps I may recover Pride enough to rally her by an over-acted Submission.

Sir Cha. Why, you improve, my Lord, this is the very Thing I was going to propose to you.

L. Mor. Was it, Faith! Hark ye, dare you stand by me?

Sir Cha. Dare I! ay, to my last drop of Assurance,

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against all the insolent Airs of the proudest Beauty in *Christendom*.

L. Mor Nay, then Defiance to her—We two—Thou hast inspired me, I find myself as valiant as a flattered Coward

Sir Cha. Courage, my Lord—I'll warrant we beat her

L. Mor. My Blood stirs at the very Thought on't; I long to be engaged.

Sir Cha She'll certainly give Ground, when she once sees you are thoroughly provoked.

L. Mor. Dear *Charles*, thou art a Friend indeed.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my Lord *Foppington* gives his Service, and if your Honour is at Leisure, he'll wait on you as soon as he's dressed

L. Mor Lord *Foppington* ! Is he in Town ?

Sir Cha Yes—I heard last Night he was come. Give my Service to his Lordship, and tell him I shall be glad he'll do me the Honour of his Company here at Dinner. [*Exit Servant*] We may have Occasion for him in our Design upon Lady *Betty*

L. Mor. What Use can we make of him ?

Sir Cha We'll see when he comes, at least there's no Danger in him; not but I suppose you know he's your Rival

L. Mor. Pshah ! a Coxcomb.

Sir Cha. Nay, don't despise him neither—he's able to give you Advice; for tho' he's in Love with the same Woman, yet to him she has not Charms enough to give a Minute's Pain

L. Mor Pr'ythee, what Sense has he of Love ?

Sir Cha. Faith, very near as much as a Man of Sense ought to have, I grant you, he knows not how to value a Woman truly deserving, but he has a pretty just Esteem for most Ladies about Town.

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L. Mor. That he follows, I grant you—for he seldom visits any of extraordinary Reputation.

Sir Cha. Have a Care, I have seen him at Lady Betty Modish's.

L. Mor. To be laughed at.

Sir Cha. Don't be too confident of that, the Women now begin to laugh with him; for he really sometimes rallies his own Humour with so much Ease and Pleasantry, that a great many Women begin to think he has no Follies at all, and those he has, have been as much owing to his Youth and a great Estate, as want of Natural Wit: 'Tis true he is often a Bubble to his Pleasures, but he has always been wisely vain enough to keep himself from being too much the Ladies' Humble Servant in Love

L. Mor. There indeed I almost envy him.

Sir Cha. The Easiness of his Opinion upon the Sex will go near to pique you—We must have him

L. Mor. As you please—But what shall we do with ourselves till Dinner?

Sir Cha. What think you of a Party at Piquet?

L. Mor. O! you are too hard for me

Sir Cha. Fy! Fy! what! when you play with his Grace?

L. Mor. Upon my Soul, he gives me three Points

Sir Cha. Does he? why then you shall give me but two—Here, Fellow, get Cards *Allons* [Exeunt]

ACT TWO. SCENE I.

THE SCENE. *Lady Betty Modish's Lodgings*

Enter Lady Betty, and Lady Easy, meeting.

L. Betty. Oh! my Dear! I am overjoyed to see you! I am strangely happy to-day, I have just received

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my new Scarf from *London*, and you are most critically come to give me your Opinion of it.

L. Easy O! your Servant, Madam, I am a very indifferent Judge, you know, What, is it with Sleeves?

L. Betty O! 'tis impossible to tell you what it is!—'Tis all Extravagance both in Mode and Fancy, my Dear; I believe there's Six Thousand Yards of Edging in it—then such an enchanting Slope from the Elbow—something so New, so Lively, so Noble, so Coquet and Charming—but you shall see it, my Dear—

L. Easy. Indeed I won't, my Dear, I am resolved to mortify you for being so wrongfully fond of a Trifle

L. Bet. Nay, now, my Dear, you are ill-natured.

L. Easy Why truly, I'm half angry to see a Woman of your Sense, so warmly concerned in the Care of her Outside, for when we have taken our best Pains about it, 'tis the Beauty of the Mind alone that gives us lasting Value.

L. Bet Oh! my Dear! my Dear! you have been a married Woman to a fine Purpose indeed, that know so little of the Taste of Mankind, Take my Word, a new Fashion upon a Fine Woman is often a greater Proof of her Value, than you are aware of

L. Easy That I can't comprehend, for you see among the Men, nothing's more ridiculous than a new Fashion Those of the first Sense are always the last that come into 'em.

L. Bet. That is, because the only Merit of a Man is his Sense, but doubtless the greatest Value of a Woman is her Beauty; an homely Woman at the Head of a Fashion, would not be allowed in it by the Men, and consequently not followed by the Women · so that to be successful in one's Fancy, is an evident Sign of one's being admired, and I always take Admiration for the best Proof of Beauty, and Beauty certainly is the Source of Power, as Power in all Creatures is the Height of Happiness.

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L. Easy. At this Rate you would rather be thought Beautiful than Good

L. Bet. As I had rather Command than Obey : the wisest homely Woman can't make a Man of Sense of a Fool, but the veriest Fool of a Beauty shall make an Ass of a Statesman, so that in short, I can't see a Woman of Spirit has any Business in this World but to dress—and make the Men like her.

L. Easy. Do you suppose this is a Principle the Men of Sense will admire you for ?

L. Bet. I do suppose, that when I suffer any Man to like my Person, he shan't dare to find Fault with my Principle.

L. Easy But Men of Sense are not so easily humbled.

L. Bet The easiest of any, one has Ten Thousand times the Trouble with a Coxcomb

L. Easy Nay, that may be, for I have seen you throw away more good Humour in hopes of a *Tendresse* from my Lord *Foppington*, who loves all Women alike, than would have made my Lord *Morelove* perfectly happy, who loves only you.

L. Bet The Men of Sense, my Dear, make the best Fools in the World Their Sincerity and good Breeding, throws them so entirely into one's Power, and gives one such an agreeable thirst of using them ill, to shew that Power—'tis impossible not to quench it.

L. Easy But methinks my Lord *Morelove's* manner to you might move any Woman to a kinder Sense of his Merit.

L. Bet. Ay ! but would it not be hard, my Dear, for a poor weak Woman to have a Man of his Quality and Reputation in her Power, and not let the World see him there ? Would any Creature sit New-dressed all Day in her Closet ? Could you bear to have a sweet-fancy'd Suit and never shew it at the Play, or in the Drawing-room ?

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L. Easy But one would not ride in it, methinks, or harass it out, when there's no occasion.

L. Bet Pooh! my Lord *Morelove's* a mere *Indian* Damask, one can't wear him out, o' my Conscience I must give him to my Woman at last, I begin to be known by him: had I not best leave him off, my dear? for (poor Soul) I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

L. Easy. Now 'tis to me amazing how a Man of his Spirit can bear to be used like a Dog for Four or Five Years together—but nothing's a Wonder in Love; yet pray, when you found you could not like him at first, why did you ever encourage him?

L. Bet. Why, what would you have me do? for my part, I could no more choose a Man by my Eye, than a Shoe, one must draw 'em on a little to see if they are right to one's Foot

L. Easy. But I'd no more fool on with a Man I could not like, than I'd wear a Shoe that pinched me.

L. Bet Ay, but then a poor Wretch tells one he'll widen 'em, or do anything, and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to turn such a Trifle, as a Pair of Shoes or an Heart, upon a Fellow's Hands again.

L. Easy Well! I confess you are very happily distinguished among most Women of Fortune to have a Man of my Lord *Morelove's* Sense and Quality so long and honourably in Love with you. for nowadays one hardly ever hears of such a Thing as a Man of Quality in Love with the Woman he would marry: To be in Love now, is only having a Design upon a Woman, a modish way of declaring War against her Virtue, which they generally attack first, by toasting up her Vanity.

L. Bet. Ay, but the World knows, that is not the Case between my Lord and me.

L. Easy. Therefore I think you happy.

L. Bet. Now I don't see it I'll swear I'm better pleased to know there are a great many foolish Fellows of Quality, that take Occasion to toast me frequently.

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L. Easy. I vow I should not thank any Gentleman for toasting me, and I have often wondered how a Woman of your Spirit could bear a great many other Freedoms I have seen some Men take with you.

L. Bet. As how, my Dear? come, prithee be free with me, for you must know I love dearly to hear my Faults—Who is't you have observed to be too free with me?

L. Easy. Why, there's my Lord *Foppington*; could any Woman but you bear to see him with a respectful Fleece stare full in your Face, draw up his Breath and cry—Gad, you're handsome!

L. Bet. My Dear, fine Fruit will have Flies about it, but, poor things, they do it no harm. For if you observe, People are generally most apt to choose that the Flies have been busy with—ha! ha!

L. Easy. Thou art a strange giddy Creature

L. Bet. That may be from too much Circulation of Thought, my Dear.

L. Easy. But my Lord *Foppington's* married, and one would not fool with him for his Lady's sake, it may make her uneasy, and——

L. Bet. Poor Creature, her Pride indeed makes her carry it off without taking any notice of it to me, though I know she hates me in her Heart, and I can't endure malicious People, so I used to dine with her once a Week, purely to give her Disorder, if you had but seen when my Lord and I fooled a little, the Creature looked so ugly.

L. Easy. But I should not think my Reputation safe; my Lord *Foppington's* a Man that talks often of his Amours, but seldom speaks of Favours that are refused him.

L. Bet. Pshah! will anything a Man says make a Woman less agreeable? Will his talking spoil one's Complexion, or put one Hair out of Order?—and for Reputation, look you, my Dear, take it for a Rule, that

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as among the lower Rank of People, no Woman wants Beauty that has a Fortune; so amongst People of Fortune, no Woman wants Virtue that has Beauty; but an Estate and Beauty joined, is of an unlimited—nay, a Power Pontifical, makes one not only Absolute, but Infallible—A fine Woman's never in the Wrong; if we were, 'tis not the Strength of a poor Creature's Reason that can unfetter him—O! how I love to hear a Wretch curse himself for living on, or now and then coming out with a——

“Yet for the Plague of human Race
This Devil has an Angel's Face”

L. Easy At this Rate, I don't see you allow Reputation to be at all essential to a fine Woman

L. Bet Just as much as Honour to a great Man; Power always is above Scandal. Don't you hear People say, the King of *France* owes most of his Conquests to breaking his Word? and would not the Confederates have a fine time on it, if they were only to go to War with Reproaches? Indeed, my Dear, that Jewel of Reputation is a very fanciful Business, one shall not see a homely Creature in Town but wears it in her Mouth, as monstrously as the *Indians* do Bobs at their Lips, and it really becomes them just alike

L. Easy Have a Care, my Dear, of trusting too far to Power alone. for nothing is more ridiculous than the Fall of Pride; and a Woman's Pride at best may be suspected to be more a Distrust, than a real Contempt of, Mankind. for when we have said all we can, a deserving Husband is certainly our best Happiness. and I don't question but my Lord *Morelove's* Merit in a little Time will make you think so too, for whatever Airs you give yourself to the World, I'm sure your heart don't want Good-nature.

L. Bet. You are mistaken, I am very ill-natured, though your Good-humour won't let you see it.

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L. Easy. Then to give me a Proof on't, let me see you refuse to go immediately and dine with me, after I have promised *Sir Charles* to bring you.

L. Bet. Pray don't ask me.

L. Easy. Why?

L. Bet. Because to let you see I hate Good nature, I'll go without asking, that you mayn't have the Malice to say I did you a Favour.

L. Easy. Thou art a mad Creature. [Exeunt]

THE SCENE changes to *Sir Charles's Lodgings.*

Lord Morelove and Sir Charles at Piquet.

Sir Cha. Come, my Lord, one single Game for the *Tout*, and so have done

L. Mor. No, hang 'em, I have enough of 'em, ill Cards are the dullest Company in the World—How much is it?

Sir Cha. Three Parties

L. Mor. Fifteen Pound—very well

[While *L. Mor.* counts out his money, a Servant gives *Sir Charles* a Letter which he reads to himself.]

Sir Cha. [To the Servant.] Give my Service, say I have Company dines with me, if I have time I'll call there in the Afternoon—Ha! ha! ha! [Exit Servant]

L. Mor. What's the matter?—there——

[Paying the Money]

Sir Cha. The old Affair—my Lady *Graveairs*.

L. Mor. O! pr'ythee how does that go on?

Sir Cha. As agreeable as a *Chancery Suit*: for now it's come to the intolerable Plague of my not being able to get rid on't; as you may see—— [Giving the Letter.]

L. Mor. [reads.] "Your Behaviour since I came to *Windsor*, has convinced me of your Villainy without my being surprised or angry at it. I desire you would let me see you at my Lodgings immediately, where I shall

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have a better Opportunity to convince you, that I never can, or positively will be as I have been. Yours etc."

A very whimsical Letter!—Faith, I think she has hard luck with you, if a Man were obliged to have a Mistress, her Person and Condition seem to be cut out for the Ease of a Lover: for she's a young, handsome, wild, well-jointed Widow—But what's your Quarrel?

Sir Cha. Nothing—she sees the Coolness happens to be first on my Side, and her Business with me now, I suppose, is to convince me, how heartily she's vexed, that she was not beforehand with me.

L. Mor. Her Pride and your Indifference must occasion a pleasant Scene sure—what do you intend to do?

Sir Cha. Treat her with a cool, familiar Air, 'till I pique her to forbid me her Sight, and then take her at her Word

L. Mor. Very gallant and provoking [*Enter a Servant*]

Serv. Sir, my Lord *Foppington* [*Exit*]

Sir Cha. O—now, my Lord, if you have a Mind to be let into the Mystery of making Love without Pain—here's one that's a Master of the Art, and shall declaim to you—

Enter Lord Foppington

My dear Lord *Foppington*!

L. Fop. My dear Agreeable! *Que je t'embrasse! Pardi!* Il y a cent Ans que ne j'ay veu—my Lord, I am your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant

L. Mor. My Lord, I kiss your Hands—I hope we shall have you here sometime, you seem to have laid in a Stock of Health to be in at the Diversions of the Place—You look extremely well.

L. Fop. To see one's Friends look so, my Lord, may easily give a *Vermeile* to one's Complexion

Sir Cha. Lovers in hope, my Lord, always have a visible *Brilliant* in their Eyes and Air.

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L. Fop. What dost thou mean, *Charles*?

Sir Cha. Come, come, confess what really brought you to *Windsor*, now you have no Business there?

L. Fop. Why, two Hours, and six of the best Nags in Christendom, or the Devil drive me.

L. Mor. You make haste, my Lord.

L. Fop. My Lord, I always fly when I pursue—But they are well kept indeed—I love to have good Creatures go as I bid 'em, you've seen 'em, *Charles*, but so has all the World; *Foppington's* Long-tails are known on every Road in *England*

Sir Cha. Well, my Lord, but how came they to bring you this Road? 'You don't use to take these irregular Jaunts without some Design in your Head of having more than nothing to do

L. Fop. Pshah! Pox! pr'ythee, *Charles*, thou knowest I am a Fellow *sans Consequence*, be where I will.

Sir Cha. Nay, nay, this is too much among Friends, my Lord, come, come—we must have it, your real Business here?

L. Fop. Why then, *entre nous*, there is a certain *Fille de Joie* about the Court that loves winning at Cards better than all the fine Things I have been able to say to her—so I have brought an odd Thousand Bill in my Pocket that I design *Tête-à-tête* to play off with her at Piquet, or so, and now the Business is out

Sir Cha. Ah! and a very good Business too, my Lord

L. Fop. If it be well done, *Charles*—

Sir Cha. That's as you manage your Cards, my Lord

L. Mor. This must be a Woman of Consequence by the Value you set upon her Favours.

Sir Cha. O! nothing's above the Price of a Fine Woman

L. Fop. Nay, look you Gentlemen, the Price may not happen to be altogether so high neither—For I fancy I

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know enough of the Game to make it an even Bet I get her for nothing.

L. Mor. How so, my Lord?

L. Fop. Because, if she happen to lose a good Sum to me, I shall buy her with her own Money.

L. Mor. That's new, I confess.

L. Fop. You know, *Charles*, 'tis not impossible but I may be five hundred Pounds deep with her—then Bills may fall short, and the Devil's in't if I want Assurance to ask her to pay me some way or other.

Sir Cha. And a man must be a Churl indeed, that won't take a Lady's Personal Security, ha! ha! ha!

L. Fop. Heh! heh! heh! Thou art a Devil, *Charles*.

L. Mor. Death! how happy is this Coxcomb!
[*aside*]

L. Fop. But to tell you the Truth, Gentlemen—I had another passing Temptation that brought me hither, which was—my Wife.

L. Mor. That's kind indeed, my Lady has been here this Month, she'll be very glad to see you.

L. Fop. That I don't know, for I design this Afternoon to send her to *London*

L. Mor. What! The same Day you come, my Lord? That would be cruel

L. Fop. Ay, but it will be mighty convenient, for she is positively of no Manner of Use in my Amours.

L. Mor. That's your Fault, the Town thinks her a very deserving Woman.

L. Fop. If she were a Woman of the Town, perhaps I should think so too, but she happens to be my Wife; and when a Wife is given to deserve more than her Husband's Inclination can pay, in my Mind she has no Merit at all

L. Mor. She's extremely well-bred, and of a very prudent Conduct.

L. Fop. Um—ay—the Woman's proud enough.

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L. Mor. Add to all this, the World allows her handsome.

L. Fop. The World's extremely civil, my Lord, and I should take it as a Favour done me, if they could find an Experiment to unmarry the poor Woman from the only Man in the World that can't think her handsome.

L. Mor. I believe there are a great many in the World that are sorry 'tis not in their Power to unmarry her.

L. Fop. I am a great many in the World's very humble Servant, and whenever they find 'tis in their Power, their high and mighty Wisdoms may command me at a quarter of an Hour's Warning

L. Mor. Pray, my Lord, what did you marry her for?

L. Fop. To pay my Debts at Play, and disinherit my younger Brother.

L. Mor. But there are some things due to a Wife

L. Fop. And there are some Debts I don't care to pay—to both which I plead Husband, and my Lord.

L. Mor. If I should do so, I should expect to have my Coach stopt in the Street, and to meet my Wife with the Windows up in a Hackney

L. Fop. Then would I put in Bail, and order a separate Maintenance.

L. Mor. And so pay double the Sum of the Debt, and be marry'd for nothing

L. Fop. Now I think deferring a Dun, and getting rid of one's Wife, are two of the most agreeable Sweets in the Liberties of an *English* Subject

L. Mor. If I were marry'd I would as soon part from my Estate, as my Wife

L. Fop. Now I would not, Sun-burn me if I would!

L. Mor. Death! But since you are thus indifferent, my Lord, why would you needs marry a Woman of so much Merit? Could not you have laid your Spleen upon some ill-natured Shrew that wanted the Plague of

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an ill Husband, and have let her alone to some plain, honest Man of Quality that would have deserved her ?

L. Fop. Why, faith, my Lord, that might have been considered, but I really grew so passionately fond of her Fortune that, Curse catch me, I was quite blind to the rest of her good qualities : for to tell you the Truth, if it had been possible that the old Put of a Peer could have tossed me in t'other five thousand for 'em, by my Consent, she should have relinquished her Merit and Virtues to any of her younger sisters.

Sir Cha Ay, ay, my Lord, virtues in a Wife are good for nothing but to make her proud, and so put the World in mind of her Husband's Faults

L. Fop Right, *Charles* · and strike me blind but the Women of Virtue are now grown such Idiots in Love, they expect of a Man, just as they do of a Coach-horse, that one's Appetite, like t'other's Flesh, should increase by Eating

Sir Cha Right, my Lord, and don't consider, that *Toujours Chapons Bouilles* will never do with an *English* Stomach

L. Fop Ha ! ha ! ha ! To tell you the truth, *Charles*, I have known so much of that sort of Eating, that I now think, for a hearty Meal, no Wild Fowl in *Europe* is comparable to a joint of *Banstead* Mutton.

L. Mor How do you mean ?

L. Fop. Why, that for my Part, I had rather have a plain Slice of my Wife's Woman than have my Guts full of e'er an *Ortolan* Duchess in *Christendom*.

L. Mor. But I thought, my Lord, your chief Business now at *Windsor* had been your Design upon a Woman of Quality.

L. Fop. That's true, my Lord, tho' I don't think your fine Lady the best Dish myself, yet a Man of Quality can't be without such things at his Table.

L. Mor. O ! then you only desire the Reputation of an Affair with her.

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L. Fop. I think the Reputation is the most inviting Part of an Amour with most Women of Quality.

L. Mor. Why so, my Lord ?

L. Fop. Why, who the Devil would run through all the Degrees of Form and Ceremony, that lead one up to the last Favour, were it not for the Reputation of understanding the nearest Way to get over the Difficulty ?

L. Mor. But, my Lord, does not the Reputation of your being so general an Undertaker frighten the Women from engaging with you ? For they say, no Man can love but one at a Time.

L. Fop. That's just one more than ever I came up to : for, stop my breath, if ever I loved one in my Life.

L. Mor. How do you get 'em, then ?

L. Fop. Why, sometimes as they get other People : I dress and let them get me, or, if that won't do, as I got my Title, buy 'em.

L. Mor. But how can you, that profess Indifference, think it worth your while to come so often up to the Price of a Woman of Quality ?

L. Fop. Because you must know, my Lord, that most of them begin now to come down to Reason, I mean those that are to be had, for some die Fools. But with the wiser Sort, 'tis not of late so very expensive, now and then a *Partie Quarrie*, a Jaunt or two in a Hack, to an *Indian House*, a little *China*, an odd Thing for a Gown, or so, and in three Days after you meet her at the Conveniency of trying it on *Chez Mademoiselle D'Epingle*.

Sir Cha. Ay, ay, my Lord, and when you are there, you know, what between a little Chat, a Dish of Tea, *Mademoiselle's* Good Humour, and a *Petit Chanson* or two, the Devil's in't if a Man can't fool away the Time 'till he sees how it looks upon her by Candlelight.

L. Fop. Heh ! heh ! heh ! well said, *Charles*. I'gad ! I fancy thee and I have unlaced many a Reputation there—Your Great Lady is as soon undressed as her Woman.

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L. Mor I could never find it so—the Shame or Scandal of a Repulse always made me afraid of attempting a Woman of Condition.

Sir Cha Ha ! ha ! I'gad, my Lord, you deserve to be ill-used, your Modesty's enough to spoil any Woman in the World, but my Lord and I understand the Sex a little better, we see plainly that Women are only cold, as some Men are brave, from the Modesty or Fear of those that attack 'em

L. I'op. Right, *Charles*—a Man should no more give up his Heart to a Woman than his Sword to a Bully, they are both as insolent as the Devil after it.

Sir Cha How do you like that, my Lord ?

[*Aside to L. Mor.*]

L. Mor. Faith, I envy him—But, my Lord, suppose your inclination should stumble upon a Woman truly virtuous, would not a severe Repulse from such an one put you strangely out of Countenance ?

L. I'op Not at all, my Lord—for if a Man don't mind a Box o' the Ear in a fair struggle with a fresh Country Girl, why the Deuce should he be concerned at an impertinent Frown from an Attack upon a Woman of Quality ?

L. Mor. Then you have no Notion of a Lady's Cruelty ?

L. I'op Ha ! ha ! let me Blood if I think there is a greater Jest in Nature. I am ready to crack my Guts with laughing to see a senseless Flirt, because the Creature happens to have a little Pride that she calls Virtue about her, give herself all the insolent Airs of Resentment and Disdain to an honest Fellow, that all the while does not care three Pinches of Snuff if she and her Virtue were to run with their last Favours through the first Regiment of Guards—ha ! ha !—it puts me in mind of an Affair of mine, so impertinent——

L. Mor O ! that's impossible, my Lord—pray let's hear it

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L. Fop. Why, I happened once to be very well in a certain Man of Quality's Family, and his Wife liked me.

L. Mor. How do you know she liked you ?

L. Fop. Why, from the very Moment I told her I liked her, she never durst trust herself at the End of a Room with me.

L. Mor. That might be her not liking you.

L. Fop. My Lord,—Women of Quality don't use to speak the Thing plain—but to satisfy you I did not want Encouragement, I never came there in my Life, but she did immediately smile, and borrow my Snuff-box.

L. Mor. She liked your Snuff at least—Well, but how did she use you ?

L. Fop. By all that's infamous, she Jilted me

L. Mor. How ! Jilt you ?

L. Fop. Ay, Death's Curse, she Jilted me.

L. Mor. Pray let's hear

L. Fop. For when I was pretty well convinced she had a mind to me, I made a Hint of an Appointment : Upon which, with an insolent Frown (that made her look as ugly as the Devil) she told me that if ever I came thither again, her Lord should know that she had forbidden me the House before—Did you ever hear of such a Slut ?

Sir Cha. Intolerable !

L. Mor. But how did her Answer agree with you ?

L. Fop. O, passionately well ! For I stared full in her Face, and burst out a laughing, at which she turned upon her Heel, and gave a Crack with her Fan like a Coachman's Whip, and bridled out of the Room with the Air and Complexion of an incensed Turkey-Cock.

[*A Servant whispers Sir Charles*]

L. Mor. What did you then ?

L. Fop. I—looked after, gaped, threw up the Sash, and fell a singing out of the Window—So that you see, my Lord, while a Man is not in Love, there's no great Affliction in missing one's Way to a Woman.

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Sir Cha. Ay, ay, you talk very well, my Lord; but now let's see how you dare behave yourself upon Action—There's one within has been too hard for as brisk a man as yourself

L. Mor. I guess who you mean—have a Care, my Lord, she'll prove your Courage for you.

L. Fop. Will she! Then she's an undone Creature. For let me tell you, Gentlemen, Courage is the whole Mystery of making Love, and of more use than Conduct is in War, for the bravest Fellow in *Europe* may beat his Brains out against the stubborn Walls of a Town—
But

—Women born to be controlled
Stoop to the forward and the Bold

ACT THREE

The SCENE continues.

Enter Lord Morelove and Sir Charles

L. Mor. So! did I not bear up bravely?

Sir Cha. Admirably! with the best-bred Insolence in Nature you insulted like a Woman of Quality when her Country-bred Husband's jealous of her in the wrong Place.

L. Mor. Ha! ha! Did you observe, when I first came into the Room, how carelessly she brushed her Eyes over me, and when the Company saluted me, stood all the while with her Face to the Window? Ha! ha!

Sir Cha. What astonished Airs she gave herself when you asked her, what made her so grave upon her old Friends?

L. Mor. And whenever I offered anything in Talk, what affected Care she took to direct her Observations of it to a third Person?

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Sir Cha. I observed she did not eat more than the Rump of a Pigeon all Dinner-time.

L. Mor. And how she coloured, when I told her, her Ladyship had lost her Stomach

Sir Cha. If you keep your Temper she's undone.

L. Mor. Provided she sticks to her Pride, I believe I may

Sir Cha. Ah! never fear her; I warrant in the Humour she is in, she would as soon part with her Sense of Feeling.

L. Mor. Well! what's to be done next?

Sir Cha. Only observe her Motions, for by her Behaviour at Dinner, I am sure she designs to gall you with my Lord *Foppington* if so, you must stand her Fire, and then play my Lady *Graveairs* upon her, whom I'll immediately pique and prepare for your Purpose

L. Mor. I understand you—the properest Woman in the World too, for she'll certainly encourage the least Offer for me, in Hopes of revenging her Slights upon you.

Sir Cha. Right: and the very Encouragement she gives you, at the same Time will give you a Pretence to widen the Breach of my Quarrel to her.

L. Mor. Besides, *Charles*, I own I am fond of any Attempt that will forward a Misunderstanding there for your Lady's Sake a Woman so truly good in her Nature, ought to have something more from a Man, than bare occasion to prove her Goodness.

Sir Cha. Why then, upon Honour, my Lord, to give you Proof that I am positively the best Husband in the World my Wife—never yet found me out

L. Mor. That may be her being the best Wife in the World; she, maybe, won't find you out

Sir Cha. Nay, if she won't tell a Man of his Faults, when she sees 'em, how the Deuce should he mend 'em? But however you see I am going to leave 'em off as fast as I can.

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L. Mor. Being tired of a Woman is indeed a pretty tolerable Assurance of a Man's not designing to fool on with her—Here she comes, and if I don't mistake, brimfull of Reproaches—You can't take her in a better Time—I'll leave you.

Enter Lady Graveairs.

Your Ladyship's most humble Servant, is the Company broke up, pray?

L. Grav No, my Lord, they are just talking of Basset; my Lord *Foppington* has a mind to Tally, if your Lordship would encourage the Table.

L. Mor O, Madam, with all my Heart! But Sir *Charles*, I know, is hard to be got to it; I'll leave your Ladyship to prevail with him. [*Exit Lord Morelove.*]

[*Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs salute coldly and trifle some time before they speak*]

L. Grav. Sir *Charles*, I sent you a Note this Morning.

Sir Cha Yes, Madam, but there were some Passages I did not expect from your Ladyship: you seemed to tax me with things that——

L. Grav. Look you, Sir, 'tis not at all material, whether I taxed you with anything or no. I don't in the least desire to hear you clear yourself, upon my Word, you may be very easy as to that matter, for my Part I am mighty well satisfied, Things are as they are, all I have to say to you is, that you need not give yourself the Trouble to call at my Lodgings this Afternoon, if you should have Time, as you were pleased to send me Word—and so your Servant, Sir, that's all—— [*Going*]

Sir Cha Hold, Madam

L. Grav Look you, Sir *Charles*, 'tis not your calling me back that will signify anything, I can assure you.

Sir Cha Why this extraordinary Haste, Madam?

L. Grav In short, Sir *Charles*, I have taken a great many Things from you of late, that you know I have often told you I would positively bear no longer—

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But I see Things are in vain, and the more People strive to oblige People the less they are thanked for it: and since there must be an end of one's Ridiculousness one Time or another, I don't see any Time so proper as the Present, and therefore Sir, I desire you'd think of things accordingly—your Servant—

Sir Cha Nay, Madam, let's start fair however; you ought at least to stay 'till I'm as ready as your Ladyship, and then—if we must part—

<i>Affectedly.</i>	{	Adieu, ye silent Grots and shady Groves,
		Ye soft Amusements of our growing
		Loves.
		Adieu, ye whispered Sighs that fanned the
		Fire
		And all the thrilling Joys of young
		Desire

L. Grav. O mighty well, Sir, I am very glad we are at last come to a right Understanding, the only Way I have long wished for, not but I'd have you to know, I see your Design thro' all your painted Ease of Resignation: I know you'd give your Soul to make me uneasy now.

Sir Cha. O fy, Madam, upon my Word, I would not make you uneasy, if it were in my Power

L. Grav. O dear Sir, you need not take such Care, upon my Word, you'll find I can part with you without the least Disorder—I'll try at least, and so once more, and for ever, Sir, your Servant. Not but you must give me leave to tell you, as my last thought of you too, that I do think—you are a Villain— [Exit hastily.]

Sir Cha. O your very humble Servant, Madam— [Bowing low.]

What a charming Quality is a Woman's Pride, that's strong enough to refuse a Man her Favours, when he's weary of 'em—ah!

[Lady Graveairs returns.]

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L. Grav. Look you, *Sir Charles*,—don't presume upon the Easiness of my Temper For to convince you that I am positively in earnest in this Matter, I desire you will let me have what Letters you have had of mine, since you came to *Windsor*, and I expect you'll return the rest, as I will yours, as soon as we come to *London*

Sir Cha. Upon my Faith, Madam, I never keep any; I always put Snuff in 'em, and so they wear out.

L. Grav. *Sir Charles*, I must have 'em, for positively I won't stir without 'em.

Sir Cha. Ha! then I must be civil, I see. [*Aside.*]—Perhaps, Madam, I have no mind to part with them—or you.

L. Grav. Look you, Sir, all those sort of things are in vain, now there's an End of everything between us—If you say you won't give 'em, I must e'en get 'em as well as I can

Sir Cha. Hah! that won't do then, I find. [*Aside.*]

L. Grav. Who's there? Mrs *Edging*—Your keeping a Letter, Sir, won't keep me, I'll assure you

Enter Edging.

Edg. Did your Ladyship call me, Madam?

L. Grav. Ay, Child, pray do me the Favour to fetch my Scarf out of the Dining-room.

Edg. Yes, Madam—

Sir Cha. O, then there's Hope again [*Aside.*]

Edg. Ha! she looks as if my Master had quarrelled with her; I hope she's going away in a Huff—she shan't stay for the scarf; I warrant her—this is pure.

[*Aside Exit smiling*]

[*After some Pause, Lady Graveairs speaks*]

L. Grav. Pray, *Sir Charles*, before I go, give me Leave now, after all, to ask you—why you have used me thus?

Sir Cha. What is it you call Usage, Madam?

L. Grav. Why then, since you will have it, how comes

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it you have been so grossly careless and neglectful of me of late? Only tell me seriously wherein I have deserved this.

Sir Cha. Why then, seriously, Madam——

[*Re-enter Edging.*]

We are interrupted.

Edg. Here's your Ladyship's Scarf, Madam.

L. Grav. Thank you, Mrs. *Edging*—O law ' pray will you let somebody get me a Chair to the Door.

Edg. Humph ' she might have told me that before, if she had been in such Haste to go—— [Exit.]

L. Grav. Now, Sir.

Sir Cha. Then, seriously, I say, I am of late grown so very lazy in my Pleasures, that I had rather lose a Woman than go through all the Plague and Trouble of keeping her, and to be free, I have found so much even in my Acquaintance with you, whom I confess to be a Mistress in the Art of pleasing, that I am from henceforth resolved to follow no Pleasure that arises above the Degree of Amusement—and that Woman that expects I should make her my Business, why,—like my business, is then in a fair Way of being forgot :—When once she comes to reproach me with Vows, and Usage, and Stuff—I had as lief hear her talk of Bills, Bonds, and Ejectments, her Passion becomes as troublesome as a Law-Suit, and I would as soon converse with my Solicitor—In short, I shall never care Sixpence for any Woman that won't be obedient——

L. Grav. I'll swear, Sir, you have a very free way of taking People; I am glad I am so well acquainted with your Principles, however—and you'd have me obedient?

Sir Cha. Why not? my Wife's so, and I think she has as much Pretence to be proud as your Ladyship.

L. Grav. Lard ' is there no Chair to be had, I wonder?

[*Enter Edging.*]

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Edg. Here's a Chair, Madam.

L. Grav. 'Tis very well, Mrs. *Edging*; Pray will you let somebody get me a Glass of fair Water.

Edg. Huh! her Huff's almost over, I suppose—I see he's a Villain still [Exit]

L. Grav. Well! that was the prettiest Fancy about Obedience sure that ever was! Certainly a Woman of Condition must be infinitely happy under the Dominion of so generous a Lover! But how came you to forget kicking and whipping all this while? Methinks you should not have left so fashionable an Article out of your Scheme of Government

Sir Cha. Um! No, there is too much Trouble in that; though I have known 'em of admirable use in the Reformation of some humoursome Gentlewomen.

L. Grav. But one thing more, and I have done—Pray what Degree of Spirit must the Lady have, that is to make herself happy under so much Freedom, Order, and Tranquillity?

Sir Cha. O! she must at least have as much Spirit as your Ladyship, or she'd give me no Pleasure in breaking it.

L. Grav. No that would be troublesome—you had better take one that's broken to your Hand,—there are such Souls to be hired, I believe, Things that will rub your Temples in an Evening, 'till you fall fast asleep in their Laps. Creatures too that think their Wages their Reward, I fancy, at last, that would be the best Method for the lazy Passion of a marry'd Man, that has outlived his any other Sense of Gratification.

Sir Cha. Look you, Madam—I have loved you very well a great while, now you would have me love you better and longer, which is not in my Power to do; and I don't think there's a Plague upon Earth like a Dun that comes for more Money than one's ever likely to be able to pay.

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L. Grav. A Dun! do you take me for a Dun, Sir? do I come a Dunning to you? [*Walks in a Heat.*]

Sir Cha. H'st! don't expose yourself—here's Company——

L. Grav. I care not—a Dun! You shall see, Sir, I can revenge an Affront, tho' I despise the Wretch that offers it—a Dun! Oh, I could die with laughing at the Fancy. [*Exit*]

Sir Cha. So! She's in admirable Order—Here comes my Lord, and I'm afraid in the very Nick of his Occasion for her

[*Enter Lord Morelove*]

L. Mor. O *Charles*! Undone again! all's lost and ruined.

Sir Cha. What's the matter now?

L. Mor. I have been playing the Fool yonder, even to Contempt, my senseless Jealousy has confessed Weakness I shall never forgive myself—She has insulted on it to that Degree too—I can't bear the Thought—O *Charles*! This Devil still is Mistress of my Heart, and I could dash my Brains out to think how grossly too I have let her know it

Sir Cha. Ah! how it would tickle her if she saw you in this Condition Ha! ha! ha!

L. Mor. Pr'ythee don't torture me think of some present Ease, or I shall burst——

Sir Cha. Well well, let's hear, pray—what has she done to you?

L. Mor. Why, ever since I left you, she treated me with so much Coolness and Ill-Nature, and that Thing of a Lord with so much laughing Ease, such an acquainted, such a spiteful Familiarity, that at the last she saw and triumphed in my Uneasiness

Sir Cha. Well! and so you left the Room in a Pet?

L. Mor. O worse, worse still! for at last, with half Shame and Anger in my Looks, I thrust myself between

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my Lord and her, pressed her by the Hand, and in a Whisper trembling begged her in Pity of herself and me to show her Good-humour only where she knew it was truly valued; at which she broke from me with a cold Smile, sat her down by the Peer, whispered him, and burst into a loud Laughter in my Face.

Sir Cha. Ha! ha! then would I have given Fifty Pound to have seen your Face. Why, what in the Name of Common Sense had you to do with Humility? Will you never have enough on't? Death! 'twas setting a lighted Match to Gunpowder to blow yourself up.

L. Mor. I see my folly now, *Charles*—but what shall I do with the Remains of Life that she has left me?

Sir Cha. O, throw it at her Feet by all means, put on your Tragedy Face, catch fast hold of her Petticoat, whip out your Handkerchief, and in point-blank Verse, desire her one way or other, to make an End of the Business.

L. Mor. What a Fool dost thou make me!
[Smiling]

Sir Cha. I only shew you, as you come out of her Hands, my Lord

L. Mor. How contemptibly have I behaved myself!

Sir Cha. That's according as you bear her Behaviour.

L. Mor. Bear it! no, I thank you, *Charles*—thou hast worked on me now; and if I bear it—What have you done with my Lady *Graveairs*?

Sir Cha. Your Business, I believe—She's ready for you, she's just gone down Stairs, and if you don't make haste after her, I expect her back with a Knife or a Pistol presently.

L. Mor. I'll go this Minute

Sir Cha. No, stay a little, here comes my Lord
We'll see what we can get out of him first

L. Mor. Methinks I now could laugh at her.

Enter Lord Foppington.

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L. Fop. Nay, pr'ythee, *Sir Charles*, let's have a little of thee—We have been so *Chagrin* without thee, that, stop my Breath, the Ladies are gone half asleep to Church for want of thy Company.

Sir Cha That's hard indeed while your Lordship was among 'em : Is Lady *Betty* gone too ?

L. Fop. She was just upon the Wing—But I caught her by the Snuff-box, and she pretends to stay to see if I'll give it her again, or no.

L. Mor Death ! 'tis that I gave her, and the only Present she would ever receive of me—Ask him how he came by it ? *[Aside to Sir Charles.]*

Sir Cha Pr'ythee don't be uneasy—Did she give it to you, my Lord ?

L. Fop. Faith, *Charles*, I can't say she did, or she did not, but we were playing the Fool, and I took it—*à la*—Pshah ! I can't tell thee in *French* neither, but *Horace* touches it to a Nicety—'twas *Pignus direptum malè pertinaci*.

L. Mor. So ! but I must bear it—if your Lordship has a mind to the Box, I'll stand by you in the keeping of it.

L. Fop My Lord, I am passionately obliged to you, but I am afraid I cannot answer your hazarding so much of the Lady's Favour.

L. Mor. Not at all, my Lord 'Tis possible I may not have the same Regard to her Frown that your Lordship has.

L. Fop *[Aside]* That's a Bite, I am sure—he'd give a Joint of his little Finger to be as well with her as I am.—But here she comes ! *Charles*, stand by me—Must not Man be a vain Coxcomb now, to think this Creature followed one ?

Sir Cha Nothing so plain, my Lord

L. Fop. Flattering Devil !—

Enter Lady Betty.

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L. Bet. Pshah ! my Lord *Foppington* ! Pr'ythee don't play the Fool now, but give me my Snuff-box—*Sir Charles*, help me to take it from him. [*Goes to L. Fop.*]

Sir Cha You know I hate Trouble, Madam.

L. Bet. Pooh ! You'll make me stay 'till Prayers are half over now

L. Fop. If you'll promise me not to go to Church, I'll give it you.

L. Bet I'll promise nothing at all, for positively I will have it [*Struggling with him*]

L. Fop Then comparatively, I won't part with it, ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Struggles with her*]

L. Bet. O you Devil ! You have killed my Arm ! Oh ! Well, seriously, if you'll let me have it, I'll give you a better

L. Mor O *Charles* ! that has a view of distant Kindness in it [*Aside to Sir Charles.*]

L. Fop Nay, now I keep it superlatively—I find there's a secret Value in it

L. Bet O dismal ! upon my Word, I am only ashamed to give it to you Do you think I would offer such an odious fancy'd Thing to anybody I had the least Value for ?

Sir Cha Now it comes a little nearer, one thinks it does not seem to be any Kindness at all. [*Aside to Lord Morelove*]

L. Fop Why, really, Madam, upon second View it has not extremely the Mode of a Lady's Utensil ! Are you sure it never held anything but Snuff ?

L. Bet O ! you Monster !

L. Fop Nay, I only ask because it seems to me to have very much the Air and Fancy of Monsieur *Smoak-and-sof's* Tobacco-box

L. Mor. I can bear no more.

Sir Cha. Why, don't then, I'll step in to the Company and return to your Relief immediately. [*Exit.*]

L. Mor. Come, Madam, will your Ladyship give me

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Leave to end the Difference—since the slightness of the thing may let you bestow it without any Mark of Favour, shall I beg it of your Ladyship?

L. Bet. O, my Lord, nobody sooner—I beg you give it my Lord.

[*Looking earnestly on Lord Foppington, who smiling gives it to L. Mor. and then bows gravely to her*]

L. Mor. Only to have the Honour of restoring it to your Lordship, and if there be any other Trifle of mine your Lordship has a Fancy to, tho' it were a Mistress, I don't know any Person in the World who has so good a Claim to my Resignation

L. Fop O, my Lord, this Generosity will distract me

L. Mor. My Lord, I do you but common Justice, but from your Conversation, I had never known the true Value of the Sex. You positively understand 'em the best of any Man breathing, therefore I think everyone of common Prudence ought to resign to you

L. Fop Then positively your Lordship's the most obliging Person in the World, for I'm sure your Judgment can never like any Woman that's not the finest Creature in the Universe [*Bowing to Lady Betty.*]

L. Mor O! Your Lordship does me too much Honour. I have the worst Judgment in the World, no Man has been more deceived in it.

L. Fop Then your Lordship, I presume, has been apt to choose in a Mask, or Candlelight

L. Mor. In a Mask indeed, my Lord, and of all Masks the most dangerous.

L. Fop Pray what's that, my Lord?

L. Mor. A bare Face

L. Fop Your Lordship will pardon me, if I don't really comprehend how a Woman's bare Face can hide her Face

L. Mor It often hides her Heart, my Lord, and

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therefore I think it sometimes a more dangerous Mask than a Piece of Velvet. That's rather a Mark than a Disguise of an ill Woman. But the Mischiefs skulking behind a beauteous Form, give no Warning, they are always Sure, Fatal, and innumerable.

L. Bet. O barbarous Aspersions! My Lord *Foppington*, have you nothing to say for the poor Women?

L. Fop. I must confess, Madam, nothing of this Nature ever happened in my Course of Amours: I always judge the beauteous Form of a Woman to be the most agreeable Part of her Composition, and when once a Lady does me the Honour to toss that into my Arms, I think myself obliged in Good-nature not to quarrel about the rest of her Equipage.

L. Bet. Why ay, my Lord, there's some Good-humour in that, now.

L. Mor. He's happy in a plain, *English* Stomach, Madam. I could recommend a Dish that's perfectly to your Lordship's Gust, where Beauty is the only Sauce to it.

L. Bet. So! [*Aside*]

L. Fop. My Lord, when my Wine's right, I never care it should be zested, a Fine Woman, like a fine Oyster, needs no Sauce but her own.

L. Mor. I know some Ladies would thank you for that Opinion.

L. Bet. My Lord *Morelove's* really grown such a Churl to the Women, I don't only think he is not, but can't conceive how he ever could be, in Love.

L. Mor. Upon my Word, Madam, I once thought I was. [*Smiling.*]

L. Bet. Fy! fy! how could you think so? I fancy now you had only a Mind to domineer over some poor Creature, and so you thought you were in Love: ha! ha!

L. Mor. The Lady I loved, Madam, grew so unfortunate in her Conduct, that she at last brought me to

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treat her with the same Indifference and Civility as I now pay your Ladyship

L. Bet. And ten to one, just at that time she never thought you such tolerable Company. Ha! ha!

L. Mor. That I can't say, Madam, for at that time she grew so affected, there was no judging of her Thoughts at all [*Mimicking her*]

L. Bet. What, and so you left the poor lady? O, you inconstant Creature!

L. Mor. No, Madam, to have loved her on had been inconstancy, for she was never two Hours together the same Woman [*L. Bet and L. Mor seem to talk*]

L. Fop [*Asiae*] Ha! ha! ha! He has a mind to abuse her, I find, so I'll e'en give him an Opportunity of doing his Business with her at once for ever—My Lord, I perceive your Lordship's going to be good Company to the Lady, and for her Sake I don't think it good Manners in me to disturb it——

Enter Sir Charles

Sir Cha My Lord Foppington!

L. Fop. O *Charles*! I was just wanting thee—Hark thee—I have three thousand Secrets for thee—I have made such Discoveries to tell thee all in one Word—*Morelove's* as jealous of me as the Devil, heh! heh! heh!

Sir Cha. Is't possible? has she given him any Occasion?

L. Fop Only rally'd him to Death upon my Account, she told me within, just now, she'd use him like a Dog, and begged me to draw off for an Opportunity.

Sir. Cha. O! keep in while the Scent lies, and she's your own, my Lord.

L. Fop. I can't tell that, *Charles*, but I'm sure she's fairly unharboured, and when once I throw off my Inclinations, I usually follow 'em 'till the Game has enough on't; and between thee and I she's pretty well

The Careless Husband

blown too, she can't stand long, I believe; for, Curse catch me, if I have not rid down half a Thousand Pound after her already.

Sir Cha. What do you mean?

L. Fop. I have lost five hundred to her at Piquet since Dinner.

Sir Cha. You are a fortunate Man, faith; you are resolved not to be thrown out, I see.

L. Fop. Hang it! What should a Man come out for, if he does not keep up the Sport?

Sir Cha. Well pushed, my Lord.

L. Fop. *Tayo!* have at her——

Sir Cha. Down! down! my Lord—ah—'ware Hanches.

L. Fop. Ah, *Charles* [*Embracing him*] Pr'ythee let's observe a little, there's a foolish Cur, now I have run her to a Stand has a mind to be at her by himself, and thou shalt see she won't stir out of her way for him.

[*They stand aside*]

L. Mor. Ha! ha! Your Ladyship's very grave of a sudden, you look as if your Lover had insolently recovered his common Sense

L. Bet. And your Lordship is so very gay, and unlike yourself, one would swear you were just come from the Pleasure of making your Mistress afraid of you.

L. Mor. No, faith, quite contrary—for do you know, Madam, I have just found out, that upon your Account I have made myself one of the most ridiculous Puppies upon the Face of the Earth—I have, upon my Faith!—nay, and so extravagantly such—ha! ha! ha! that it's at last become a jest even to myself; and I can't help laughing at it for the Soul of me, ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. I want to cure him of that Laugh now. [*Disdainfully and aside.*] My Lord, since you are so generous, I'll tell you another Secret: Do you know too, that I still find (spite of all your great Wisdom, and my contemptible Qualities, as you are pleased now

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and then to call them) : do you know, I say, that I see under all this, you still love me with the same helpless Passion, and can your vast Foresight imagine I won't use you accordingly, for these extraordinary Airs you are pleased to give yourself ?

L. Mor. O by all means, Madam, 'tis fit you should, and I expect it, whenever it is in your Power—Confusion ! [*Aside.*]

L. Bet. My Lord, you have talked to me this half Hour, without confessing Pain [*Pauses and affects to Gape.*] Only remember it.

L. Mor. Hell and Tortures !

L. Bet. What 'did you say, my Lord ?

L. Mor. Fire and Furies !

L. Bet. Ha ! ha ! he's disordered—now I am easy—My Lord *Foppington*, have you a Mind to your Revenge at *Piquet* ?

L. Fop. I have always a Mind to an Opportunity of entertaining your Ladyship, Madam.

L. Mor. O *Charles*—the Insolence of this Woman might furnish out a thousand Devils.

Sir Cha. And your Temper is enough to furnish out a Thousand such Women—Come away—I have Business for you upon the Terrace.

L. Mor. Let me but speak one Word to her——

Sir Cha. Not a Syllable—the Tongue's a Weapon you'll always have the worse at ; for I see you have no Guard, and she carries a Devilish Edge.

L. Bet. My Lord, don't let anything I've said, frighten you away : for if you have the least inclination to stay and rail, you know the old Conditions, 'tis but your asking me Pardon next Day, and you may give your Passion any Liberty you think fit.

L. Mor. Daggers and Death !

Sir Cha. Are you mad ?

L. Mor. Let me speak to her now, or I shall burst.

The Careless Husband

Sir Cha. Upon Condition you'll speak no more of her to me, my Lord, do as you please.

L. Mor. Pr'ythee pardon me—I know not what to do.

Sir Cha. Come along—I'll set you to work, I warrant you—Nay, nay, none of your parting Ogles—will you go?

L. Mor. Yes—and I hope for ever.

[*Exit Sir Charles, pulling away Lord Morelove.*]

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha! Did ever mortal Monster set up for a Lover with such unfortunate Qualifications?

L. Bet. Indeed, my Lord *Morelove* has something strangely singular in his Manner

L. Fop. I thought I should have burst to see the Creature pretend to Rally, and give himself the Airs of one of Us—but, run me through, Madam, your Ladyship pushed like a Fencing-Master, that last Thrust was a *Coup-de-Grace*, I believe—I'm afraid his Honour will hardly meet your Ladyship in haste again.

L. Bet. Not unless his Second, *Sir Charles*, keeps him better in Practice, perhaps—Well, the Humour of this Creature has done me singular Service to-day; I must keep it up, for fear of a second Engagement. [*Aside*]

L. Fop. Never was poor Wit so foiled at his own Weapon, sure.

L. Bet. Wit? Had he ever any Pretence to it?

L. Fop. Ha! ha! he has not much in Love, I think, though he wears the Reputation of a very pretty young Fellow among some sort of People, but, strike me stupid, if ever I could discover common Sense in all the Progress of his Amours, He expects a Woman should like him for endeavouring to convince her, that she has not one good Quality belonging to the whole Composition of her Soul and Body.

L. Bet. That, I suppose, is only a modest Hope that she'll mend her Faults, to qualify herself for his vast Merit, ha! ha!

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L. Fop. Poor *Morelove*, I see she can't endure him.
[*Aside.*]

L. Bet. Or if one really has all those Faults, he does not consider, that Sincerity in Love is as much out of Fashion as sweet Snuff; no Body takes it now.

L. Fop. O! no Mortal, Madam, unless it be here and there a Squire, that's making his lawful Court to the Cherry-cheek Charms of my Lord Bishop's great fat daughter in the Country

L. Bet. O, what a surfeiting Couple has he put together— [*Throwing her Hand carelessly upon his*]

L. Fop. Fond of me, by all that's tender!—Poor Fool, I'll give her Ease immediately. [*Aside*]—But, Madam, you were pleased just not to offer me my Revenge at Piquet—Now here's nobody within, and I think we can't make use of a better Opportunity.

L. Bet. O! no. Not now, my Lord!—I have a Favour I would fain beg of you first.

L. Fop. But Time, Madam, is very precious in this Place, and I shall not easily forgive myself if I don't take him by the Forelock

L. Bet. But I have a great mind to have a little more Sport with my Lord *Morelove* first, and would fain beg your Assistance

L. Fop. O! with all my Heart, and, upon Second Thoughts, I don't know but piqueing a Rival in public may be as good Sport as being well with a Mistress in private: for after all, the Pleasure of a fine Woman is like that of her Virtue, not so much in the thing, as the Reputation of having it [*Aside*]—Well, Madam, but how can I serve you in this Affair?

L. Bet. Why methought, as my Lord *Morelove* went out, he shewed a stern Resentment in his Look, that seemed to threaten me with Rebellion, and downright Defiance: Now I have a great Fancy, that you and I should follow him to the Terrace, and laugh at his Resolution before he has time to put it into Practice.

The Careless Husband

L. Fop. And so punish his Fault before he commits it! ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet Nay, we won't give him time, if his Courage should fail to repent it.

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha! let me Blood if I don't long to be at it, ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet O! 'twill be such Diversion to see him bite his Lips and broil within, only with seeing us ready to split our Sides in laughing at nothing, ha! ha!

L. Fop. Ha! ha! I see the Creature does really like me [*Aside*]—And then, Madam, to hear him hum a broken piece of a Tune, in affectation of his not minding us—'twill be so foolish when we know he loves us to Death all the while, ha! ha!

L. Bet And if at last his sage Mouth should open in surly Contradiction of our Humour, then will we, in pure Opposition to his, immediately fall foul upon every Thing that is not Gallant and Fashionable; Constancy shall be the Mark of Age and Ugliness, Virtue a Jest, we'll rally Discretion out of Doors, lay Gravity at our Feet, and only free Love, Disorder, Liberty, and Pleasure, be our standing Principles

L. Fop. Madam, you transport me. For if ever I was obliged to Nature for any one tolerable Qualification, 'twas positively the Talent of being exuberantly pleasant upon this Subject—I am impatient—my Fancy's upon the Wing already—let's fly to him.

L. Bet. No, no, stay 'till I am just got out, our going together won't be so proper

L. Fop. As your Ladyship pleases, Madam—But when this Affair is over, you won't forget that I have a certain Revenge due

L. Bet. Ay! ay! After Supper I am for you—Nay, you shan't stir a Step, my Lord—— [*Seeing her to the Door*]

L. Fop Only to tell you, you have fixed me yours to the last Existence of my Soul's eternal Entity——

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L. Bet. O, your Servant. [Exit.]

L. Fop. Ha! ha! stark mad for me, by all that's handsome: Poor *Morelove*! That a Fellow who has ever been abroad, should think a Woman of her Spirit is to be taken as the Confederates do Towns, by a regular Siege, when so many of the *French* Successes must have shewn him the surest Way is to whisper the Governor—How can a Coxcomb give himself the Fatigue of bombarding a Woman's Understanding when he may with so much Ease make a Friend of her Constitution—I'll see if I can shew him a little *French* Play with Lady *Betty*—let me see—Ay, I'll make an end of it in the old way, get her into Piquet at her own Lodgings—not mind one Tittle of my Play, give her every Game before she's half up, that she may judge the Strength of my inclination by my haste of losing up to her Price; then, of a sudden, with a familiar Leer cry—Rat Piquet—sweep Counters, Cards and Money all upon the Floor, *et donc*—*L'Affaire est faite.* [Exit]

ACT FOUR SCENE I

SCENE, the Castle Terrace.

Enter Lady Betty and Lady Easy

L. Easy My Dear, you really talk to me as if I were your Lover, and not your Friend, or else I am so dull, that by all you've said I can't make the least Guess at your real Thoughts—Can you be serious for a Moment?

L. Bet. But I would do more to oblige you

L. Easy. Then pray deal ingenuously, and tell me without reserve, are you sure you don't love my Lord *Morelove*?

L. Bet. Then seriously—I think not—But because

The Careless Husband

I won't be positive, you shall judge by the worst of my Symptoms—First, I own I like his Conversation, his Person has neither Fault nor Beauty—well enough—I don't remember I ever secretly wished myself married to him, or—that I ever seriously resolved against it.

L. Easy. Well, so far you are tolerably safe :—But come—as to his Manner of addressing to you, what Effect has that had ?

L. Bet. I am not a little pleased to observe few Men follow a Woman with the same Fatigue and Spirit, that he does me—am more pleased when he lets me use him ill, and if ever I have a favourable thought of him, 'tis when I see he can't bear the Usage

L. Easy. Have a Care, that last is a dangerous Symptom—he pleases your Pride, I find.

L. Bet. O ! perfectly . in that—I own no Mortal ever came up to him.

L. Easy. But now, my Dear ! now comes the main Point—Jealousy ! Are you sure you have never been touched with it ? Tell me that with a safe Conscience and then I pronounce you clear

L. Bet. Nay, then, I defy him, for positively I was never jealous in my Life

L. Easy. How, Madam ! have you never been stirred enough to think a Woman strangely forward for being a little familiar in Talk with him ? Or are you sure his Gallantry to another never gave you the least Disorder ? Were you never, upon no Accident, in an Apprehension of losing him ?

L. Bet. Hah ! Why, Madam—Bless me !—wh-wh-why sure you don't call that Jealousy, my Dear ?

L. Easy. Nay, nay, that is not the Business—Have you ever felt anything of this Nature, Madam ?

L. Bet. Lord ! don't be so hasty, my Dear—anything of this Nature—O Lord ! I swear I don't like it . Dear Creature, bring me off here ; for I am half frightened out of my wits.

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L. Easy. Nay, if you can rally upon't, your Wound is not overdeep, I'm afraid.

L. Bet. Well, that's comfortably said, however.

L. Easy. But come to the Point—how far have you been jealous ?

L. Bet. Why—O bless me ! He gave the Musick one Night to my Lady *Languish* here upon the Terrace : and tho' she and I were very good Friends I remember I could not speak to her in a Week for't—O !

L. Easy. Nay, now you may laugh if you can, for, take my Word the Marks are upon you—But come—what else ?

L. Bet. O nothing else, upon my Word, my Dear !

L. Easy. Well, one Word more, and then I give Sentence . Suppose you were heartily convinced that he actually followed another Woman ?

L. Bet. But pray, my Dear, what Occasion is there to suppose any such Thing at all ?

L. Easy. Guilty, upon my Honour

L. Bet. Pshah ! I defy him to say, that ever I owned any Inclination for him.

L. Easy. No, but you have given him terrible Leave to guess it.

L. Bet. If ever you see us meet again, you'll have but little Reason to think so, I can assure you.

L. Easy. That I shall see presently, for here comes Sir *Charles*, and I'm sure my Lord can't be far off.

Enter Sir Charles

Sir Cha. Servant, Lady *Betty*—my Dear, how do you do ?

L. Easy. At your Service, my Dear—But pray what have you done with my Lord *Morelove* ?

L. Bet. Ay, Sir *Charles*, pray how does your Pupil do ? Have you any Hopes of him ? Is he docible ?

Sir Cha. Well, Madam, to confess your Triumph over me, as well as him, I own my Hopes of him are

The Careless Husband

lost. I offered what I could to his Instruction, but he's incorrigibly yours, and undone—and the News, I presume, does not displease your Ladyship.

L. Bet. Fy, fy, Sir *Charles*, you disparage my Friend, I am afraid you don't take pains with him.

Sir Cha. Ha! I fancy, Lady *Betty*, your Good-nature won't let you sleep o' Nights: Don't you love dearly to hurt People?

L. Bet. O! your Servant then without a Jest, the Man is so unfortunate in his want of Patience that let me die, if I don't pity him.

Sir Cha. Ha! Strange Goodness—O that I were your Lover for a Month or two.

L. Bet. What then?

Sir Cha. I would make that pretty Heart's Blood of yours ache in a Fortnight.

L. Bet. Auh! I should hate you, your Assurance would make your Addresses intolerable.

Sir Cha. I believe it would, for I'd never address to you at all.

L. Bet. O! you Clown you! [*Hitting him with her Fan.*]

Sir Cha. Why, what to do? to feed a diseased Pride, that's eternally breaking out in the Affectation of an Ill-nature that—in my Conscience I believe is but Affectation.

L. Bet. You, nor your Friend have no great Reason to complain of my Fondness, I believe Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Cha. [*Looking earnestly on her*] Thou insolent Creature! How can you make a Jest of a Man, whose whole Life's but one continued Torment from your want of common Gratitude?

L. Bet. Torment! for my Part I really believe him as easy as you are.

Sir Cha. Poor intolerable Affectation! You know the contrary, you know how blindly yours, you know

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your Power, and the whole Pleasure of your Life's the poor and low abuse of it.

L. Bet. Pray, how do I abuse it—if I have any Power?

Sir Cha. You drive him to Extremes that make him mad, then Punish him for acting against his Reason: You've almost turned his Brain, his common Judgment fails him, he's now, at this very Moment, driven by his Despair upon a Project, in hopes to free himself from your Power, that I am sensible, and so must any be that has his Sense, of course must ruin him with you, for ever, I almost blush to think of it, yet your unreasonable Disdain has forced him to it, and should he now suspect I offered but a Hint of it to you, and in Contempt of his Design, I know he'd call my Life to answer it. But I have no regard to Men in Madness, I rather choose for once to trust in your Good-nature, in hopes the Man, whom your unwary Beauty has made miserable, your Generosity would scorn to make ridiculous.

L. Bet. *Sir Charles*, you charge very near home, I never had it in my Inclination to make anything ridiculous that did not deserve it. Pray what is this Business you think so extravagant in him?

Sir Cha. Something so absurdly rash and bold, you'll hardly forgive even me that tell it you.

L. Bet. O fy! If it be a Fault, *Sir Charles*, I shall consider it as His, not Yours. Pray what is it?

L. Easy. I long to know, methinks

Sir Cha. You may be sure he did not want my Dissuasions from it.

L. Bet. Let's hear it!

Sir Cha. Why this Man, whom I have known to love you with such Excess of generous Desire, whom I have heard in his ecstatic Praises on your Beauty talk, till from the soft Heat of his distilling Thoughts the Tears have fallen——

L. Bet. O, *Sir Charles*—— [Blushing]

The Careless Husband

Sir Cha Nay, grudge not, since 'tis past, to hear what was (though you contemned it) once his Merit : But now that Merit ought to be forgotten.

L. Bet. Pray, Sir, be plain.

Sir Cha. This Man, I say, whose unhappy Passion has so ill succeeded with you, at last has forfeited all his Hopes (into which, pardon me, I confess my Friendship has lately flattered him) his Hopes of even deserving now your lowest Pity or Regard

L. Bet You amaze me—For I can't suppose his utmost Malice dares assault my Reputation—and what——

Sir Cha. No, but he maliciously presumes the World will do it for him, and indeed he has taken no unlikely Means to make 'em busy with their Tongues . For he is this Moment upon the open Terrace, in the highest Public Gallantry with my Lady *Graveairs*. And to convince the World and me, he said he was not that tame Lover we fancied him, he'd adventure to give her the Musick to-night : Nay, I heard him, before my Face, speak to one of the Hautboys to engage the rest, and desired they would all take their Directions only from my Lady *Graveairs*

L. Bet. My Lady *Graveairs* ! truly I think my Lord's very much in the right on't—for my Part, Sir *Charles*, I don't see any thing in this that's so very ridiculous, nor indeed that ought to make me think either the better or worse of him for't

Sir Cha. Pshah ! Pshah ! Madam, you and I know 'tis not in his Power to renounce you . this is but the poor Disguise of a resenting Passion vainly ruffled to Storm, which the least gentle Look from you can reconcile at Will, and laugh into a Calm again.

L. Bet Indeed, Sir *Charles*, I shan't give myself the Trouble, I believe.

Sir Cha. So I told him, Madam. Are not all your Complaints, said I, already owing to her Pride, and can

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you suppose this public Defiance of it (which you know you can't make good, too) won't incense her more against you?—That's what I'd have said, said he, starting wildly, I care not what becomes of me, so I but live to see her piqued at it.

L. Bet. Upon my Word, I fancy my Lord will find himself mistaken—I shan't be piqued, I believe—I must first have a Value for the Thing I lose, before it piques me. Piqued! Ha! ha! ha! [*Disordered.*]

Sir Cha. Madam, you've said the very Thing I urged to him: I know her Temper so well, said I, that though she doted on you, if you once stood out against her, she'd sooner burst than shew the least Motion of Uneasiness.

L. Bet. I can assure you, Sir Charles, my Lord won't find himself deceived in your Opinion—Piqued!

Sir Cha. She has it. [*Aside*]

L. Easy. Alas! poor Woman! how little do our Passions make us!

L. Bet. Not but I would advise him to have a little Regard to my Reputation in this Business. I would have him take heed of publicly affronting me.

Sir Cha. Right, Madam, that's what I strictly warned him of: For among Friends, whenever the World sees him follow another Woman, the malicious Tea-Tables will be very apt to be free with your Ladyship

L. Bet. I'd have him consider that, methinks

Sir Cha. But alas! Madam, 'tis not in his Power to think with Reason, his mad Resentment has destroyed even his Principles of common Honesty. he considers nothing but a senseless proud Revenge, which in his Fit of Lunacy 'tis impossible that either Threats or Danger can dissuade him from.

L. Bet. What! does he defy me, threaten me! then he shall see, that I have Passions too, and I know, as well as he, to stir my Heart against any Pride that dares insult me. Does he suppose I fear him? Fear the

The Careless Husband

little Malice of a slighted Passion, that my own Scorn has flung into a despised Resentment ! Fear him ! O ! It provokes me to think he dare have such a Thought !

L. Easy. Dear Creature, don't disorder yourself so.

L. Bet. Let me but live to see him once more within my Power, and I'll forgive the rest of Fortune. [*Walking disordered.*]

L. Easy Well ! Certainly I am very ill-natured, for tho' I see this News has disturbed my Friend, I can't help being pleased with any Hope of my Lady *Graveairs* being otherwise disposed of. [*Aside.*—My Dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.

Sir Cha O ! Not at all—You shall see—I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a Dish of Tea.

L. Bet. I may see him with his complaining Face again

Sir Cha I am sorry, Madam, you so wrongly judge of what I've told you . I was in Hopes to have stirred your Pity, not your Anger : I little thought your Generosity would punish him for Faults, which you yourself resolved he should commit—Yonder he comes, and all the World with him : Might I advise you, Madam, you should not resent the thing at all—I would not so much as stay to see him in his Fault : nay, I'd be the last that heard of it . Nothing can sting him more, or so justly punish his Folly, as your utter Neglect of it.

L. Easy Come, dear Creature, be persuaded, and go home with me, indeed it will shew more Indifference to avoid him.

L. Bet. No, Madam, I'll oblige his Vanity for once and stay to let him see how strangely he has piqued me.

Sir Cha. [*Aside.*] O not at all to speak of, you had as good part with a little of that Pride of yours, or I shall yet make it a very troublesome Companion to you. [*Goes from them and whispers Lord Morelove.*]

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Enter Lord Foppington; a little after, Lord Morelove, Lady Graveairs and other Ladies.

L. Fop. Ladies, your Servant—O! we have wanted you beyond Reparation—such Diversions!

L. Bet Well! my Lord, have you seen my Lord Morelove?

L. Fop Seen him!—ha! ha! ha!—O, I have such things to tell you, Madam, you'll die——

L. Bet O pray, let's hear 'em, I was never in a better Humour to receive 'em.

L. Fop. Hark you [*They whisper.*]

L. Mor So, she's engaged already. [*To Sir Charles*]

Sir Cha. So much the better, make but a just Advantage of my Success, and she's undone

L. Fop } Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet }

Sir Cha You see already what ridiculous Pains she is taking to stir your Jealousy, and cover her own

L. Fop. } Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. }

L. Mor. O never fear me. for, upon my Word, it now appears ridiculous even to me

Sir Cha And hark you—— [*Whispers L. Mor.*]

L. Bet And so the Widow was as full of Airs as his Lordship?

Sir Cha. Only observe that, and 'tis impossible you can fail. [*Aside*]

L. Mor Dear *Charles*, you have convinced me, and I thank you.

L. Grav. My Lord Morelove! What, do you leave us?

L. Mor. Ten Thousand Pardons, Madam, I was but just——

L. Grav. Nay, nay, no Excuses, my Lord, so you will but let us have you again.

Sir Cha. [*Aside to L. Grav.*] I see you have good Humour, Madam, when you like your Company.

The Careless Husband

L. Grav. And you, I see, for all your mighty Thirst of Dominion, could stoop to be obedient, if one thought it worth one's while to make you so. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Cha. Ha! Power would make her an admirable Tyrant. [*Aside*]

L. Easy. [*Observing Sir Charles and Lady Grav.*] So! There's another Couple have quarrelled too, I find—Those Airs to my Lord *Morelove* look as if designed to recover Sir *Charles* into Jealousy: I'll endeavour to join the Company, and it may be, that will let me into the Secret. [*Aside*]*—*My Lord *Foppington*, I vow this is very uncomplaisant, to engross so agreeable a part of the Company to yourself

Sir Cha. Nay, nay, my Lord, this is not fair indeed to enter into Secrets among Friends!—Ladies, what say you? I think we ought to declare against it.

Ladies. O! No Secrets, no Secrets

L. Bet. Well, Ladies, I ought only to ask your Pardon, my Lord's excusable, for I would haul him into a Corner.

L. Fop. I swear 'tis very hard, ho! I observe two People of extreme Condition, can no sooner grow particular, but the Multitudes of both Sexes are immediately up and think their Properties invaded——

L. Bet. Odious Multitude——

L. Fop. Perish the *Canaille*

L. Grav. O my Lord, we Women have all Reason to be jealous of Lady *Betty Modish's* Power.

L. Mor. [*To Lady Betty*] As the Men, Madam, all have of my Lord *Foppington*; besides, Favourites of great Merit discourage those of an inferior Class for their Prince's Service. He has already lost you one of your Retinue, Madam

L. Bet. Not at all, my Lord, he has only made room for another, One must sometimes make Vacancies, or there could be no Preferments.

L. Easy. . Ha! ha! Ladies' Favours, my Lord, like

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Places at Court, are not always held for Life, you know.

L. Bet. No, indeed! if they were, the poor fine Women would be always used like their Wives, and no more minded than the Business of the Nation.

L. Easy Have a care, Madam, an undeserving Favourite has been the Ruin of many a Prince's Empire.

L. Fop Ha! ha! ha! Upon my Soul, Lady *Betty*, we must grow more discreet: for positively if we go on at this rate, we shall have the World throw you under the Scandal of Constancy, and I shall have all the Swords of Condition at my Throat for a Monopolist.

L. Mor O! 'There's no such fear of that, my Lord, tho' the Men of Sense give it over, there will always be some Idle Fellows vain enough to believe their Merits may succeed as well as your Lordship's

L. Bet. Or if they should not, my Lord, Calf-Lovers, you know, need not fear being long out of Employment, while there are so many well-disposed People in the World—there are generally Neglected Wives, Stale Maids, or Charitable Widows, always ready to relieve the Necessities of a disappointed Passion—and, by the way, hark you, Sir *Charles*—

L. Mor [*Aside*] So! She's stirred, I see, 'for all her Pains to hide it—she would hardly have glanced an Affront at a Woman she was not piqued at

L. Grav That Wit was thrown at me, I suppose, but I'll return it

L. Bet. [*Softly to Sir Charles*] Pray how came you all this while to trust your Mistress so completely?

Sir Cha One is not so apt, Madam, to be alarmed at the Liberties of an old Acquaintance, as perhaps your Ladyship ought to be at the Resentment of an Hard-used, Honourable Lover.

L. Bet. Suppose I were alarmed, how does that make you easy?

Sir Cha. Come, come, be wise at last; my trusting

The Careless Husband

them together, may easily convince you that (as I told you before) I know his Addresses to her are only outward, and 'twill be your Fault now, if you let him go on till the World thinks him in earnest; and a thousand busy Tongues are set upon malicious Enquiries into your Reputation.

L. Bet. Why, Sir *Charles*, do you suppose while he behaves himself as he does, that I won't convince him of my Indifference?

Sir Cha. But hear me, Madam—

L. Grav. [*Aside*] The Air of that Whisper looks as if my Lady had a mind to be making her Peace again; and 'tis possible his Worship's being so busy in the Matter too, may proceed as much from his Jealousy of my Lord with me, as Friendship with her, at least, I fancy so; therefore, I'm resolved to keep her still piqued, and prevent it, though it be only to gall him—Sir *Charles*, that is not fair to take a Privilege you just now declared against my Lord *Foppington*

L. Mor. Well observed, Madam

L. Grav. Beside, it looks so affected to whisper, when everybody guesses the Secret.

L. Mor. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. O! Madam, your Pardon in particular: But 'tis possible you may be mistaken: the Secrets of People that have any Regard to their Actions, are not so soon guessed, as theirs that have made a Confident of the whole Town.

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Grav. A *Coquette* in her affected Airs of Disdain to a revolted Lover, I'm afraid must exceed your Ladyship in Prudence, not to let the World see at the same time, she'd give her Eyes to make her Peace with him Ha! ha!

L. Mor. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. 'Twould be a Mortification indeed, if it were in the Power of a fading Widow's Charms to prevent it, and the Man must be miserably reduced sure, that

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could bear to live buried in Woollen, or take up with the Motherly Comfort of a Swan-skin Petticoat. Ha! ha!

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Grav. Widows, it seems, are not so squeamish to their Interest, they know their own Minds, and take the Man they like, though it happens to be one that a froward, vain Girl has disobliged, and is pining to be Friends with.

L. Mor. Nay, tho' it happens to be one, that confesses he once was fond of a Piece of Folly, and afterwards ashamed on't.

L. Bet. Nay, my Lord, there's no standing against two of you

L. Fop. No, Faith, that's odds at Tennis, my Lord; not but if your Ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your Back-hand a little, tho' upon my Soul you may safely set me up at the Line: for, knock me down, if ever I saw a Rest of Wit better played than that last, in my Life—What say you, Madam, shall we engage?

L. Bet. As you please, my Lord.

L. Fop. Ha! ha! ha! *Allons. Tout de Bon Jours, milor.*

L. Mor. O pardon me, Sir, I shall never think myself in anything a Match for the Lady

L. Fop. To you, Madam

L. Bet. That's much, my Lord, when the World knows you have been so many Years teasing me to play the Fool with you.

L. Fop. Ah! *Bien Joue*

L. Mor. At that Game, I confess your Ladyship has chosen a much properer Person to improve your Hand with.

L. Fop. To me, Madam—my Lord, I presume whoever the Lady thinks fit to play the Fool with, will at least be able to give as much Envy as the wise Person that had not Wit enough to keep well with her when he was so.

The Careless Husband

L. Grav. O! my Lord! Both Parties must needs be greatly happy. For I dare swear, neither will have any rivals to disturb 'em.

L. Mor Ha! ha!

L. Bet. None that will disturb 'em, I dare swear.

L. Fop Ha! ha! ha!

L. Mor

L. Grav. } Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. }

Sir Cha. I don't know, Gentlefolks—but you are all in extreme Good-humour, methinks, I hope there's none of it affected.

L. Easy. I should be loth to answer for any but my Lord *Foppington*.

L. Bet. Mine is not, I swear.

L. Mor Nor mine, I'm sure.

L. Grav Mine's sincere, depend upon't.

L. Fop And may the eternal Frowns of the whole Sex doubly demme, if mine is not.

L. Easy. Well, good People, I am mighty glad to hear it. You have all performed extremely well. but if you please, you shall give over your Wit now, while it is well

L. Bet. [*to herself*] Now I see his Humour, I'll stand it out, if I were sure to die for't.

Sir Cha You should not have proceeded so far with my Lord *Foppington* after what I had told you. [*Aside, to L. Bet*]

L. Bet. Pray, *Sir Charles*, give me leave to understand myself a little.

Sir Cha Your Pardon, Madam, I thought a right Understanding would have been for both your Interests, and Reputation

L. Bet. For his, perhaps.

Sir Cha. Nay then, Madam, it's time for me to take care of my Friend.

L. Bet. I never in the least doubted your Friendship

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to him in anything that was to shew yourself my Enemy.

Sir Cha. Since I see, Madam, you have so ungrateful a Sense of my Lord *Morelove's* Merit, and my Service, I shall never be ashamed of using my Power henceforth to keep him entirely out of your Ladyship's. [*Goes from her.*]

L. Bet. Was ever any Thing so insolent! I could find it in my Heart to run the Hazard of a downright Compliance, if it were only to convince him that my Power, perhaps, is not inferior to his. [*To herself.*]

L. Easy. My Lord *Foppington*, I think you generally lead the Company upon these Occasions Pray will you think of some prettier sort of Diversion for us, than Parties and Whispers?

L. Fop. What say you, Ladies, shall we step and see what's done at the Basset-table?

L. Bet. With all my Heart; Lady *Easy*—

L. Easy. I think 'tis the best thing we can do, and because we won't part to-night, you shall all sup where you dined—What say you, my Lord?

L. Mor. Your Ladyship may be sure of me, Madam

L. Fop. Ay! ay! we'll all come

L. Easy. Then pray let's change Parties a little. My Lord *Foppington*, you shall Squire me

L. Fop. O! you do me Honour, Madam

L. Bet. My Lord *Morelove*, pray let me speak with you.

L. Mor. Me, Madam?

L. Bet. If you please, my Lord.

L. Mor. Ha! That Look shot through me! what can this mean [*Aside.*]

L. Bet. This is no proper Place to tell you what it is, but there is one Thing I'd fain be truly answered in. I suppose you'll be at my Lady *Easy's* by and by, and if you'll give me leave there—

The Careless Husband

L. Mor. If you please to do me that Honour, Madam, I shall certainly be there.

L. Bet. That's all, my Lord

L. Mor. Is not your Ladyship for walking?

L. Bet. If your Lordship dares venture with me.

L. Mor. O! Madam! [*Taking her Hand.*] How my Heart dances, what heavenly Music's in her Voice, when softened into Kindness. [*Aside*]

L. Bet. Ha! his Hand trembles—Sir *Charles* may be mistaken.

L. Fop. My Lady *Graveairs*, you won't let Sir *Charles* leave us?

L. Grav. No, my Lord, we'll follow you—stay a little [*To Sir Charles*]

Sir Cha. I thought your Ladyship designed to follow 'em

L. Grav. Perhaps I'd speak with you.

Sir Cha. But, Madam, consider, we shall certainly be observed

L. Grav. Lord, Sir! If you think it such a Favour.
[*Exit hastily*]

Sir Cha. Is she gone, let her go, etc.
[*Exit singing*]

ACT FIVE. SCENE I.

The SCENE continues

Enter Sir Charles and Lord Morelove.

Sir Cha. Come a little this way—my Lady *Graveairs* had an Eye upon me as I stole off, and I'm apprehensive will make use of any Opportunity to talk with me.

L. Mor. O! we are pretty safe here—well: you were speaking of Lady *Betty*.

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Sir Cha Ay, my Lord—I say, notwithstanding all this sudden Change of her Behaviour I would not have you yet too secure of her: for between you and I, since, I told you, I have professed myself an open Enemy to her Power with you, 'tis not impossible but this new Air of Good-humour may very much proceed from a little Woman's Pride, of convincing me you are not yet out of her Power.

L. Mor. Not unlikely: But still can we take no Advantage of it?

Sir Cha. That's what I have been thinking of—look you—Death! my Lady *Graveairs*!

L. Mor. Ha! she will have Audience, I find

Sir Cha. There's no avoiding her—the Truth is, I have owed her a little Good-nature a great while—I see there is but one way of getting rid of her—I must even appoint her a Day of Payment at last If you'll step into my Lodgings, my Lord, I'll just give her an Appointment, and be with you in a Moment

L. Mor. Very well, I'll stay there for you

[*Exit L. Morelove*]

Enter L. Graveairs on the other Side.

L. Grav. *Sir Charles!*

Sir Cha. Come, come, no more of these reproachful Looks, you'll find, Madam, I have deserved better of you than your Jealousy imagines—Is it a Fault to be tender of your Reputation?—fy, fy—This may be a proper time to talk, and of my contriving too—You see, I just now shook off my Lord *Morelove* on purpose

L. Grav. May I believe you?

Sir Cha. Still doubting my Fidelity, and mistaking my Discretion for want of Good-nature!

L. Grav. Don't think me troublesome—For I confess, 'tis Death to think of parting with you: Since the World sees, for you I have neglected Friends and Reputation, have stood the little Insults of disdainful Prudes,

The Careless Husband

that envied me perhaps your Friendship, have borne the freezing Looks of near and general Acquaintance—Since this is so,—don't let 'em ridicule me, and say my foolish Vanity undid me; don't let 'em point at me as a Cast Mistress

Sir Cha. You wrong me to suppose the Thought: you'll have better of me when we meet: When shall you be at leisure?

L. Grav. I confess, I would see you once again; if what I have more to say prove ineffectual, perhaps it may convince me then, 'tis my Interest to part with you—Can you come to-night?

Sir Cha. You know we have Company, and I'm afraid they'll stay too late—Can't it be before Supper?
—What's o'clock now?

L. Grav. It's almost Six.

Sir Cha. At seven then be sure of me; 'till when I'd have you go back to the Ladies, to avoid Suspicion, and about that time have the Vapours.

L. Grav. May I depend upon you? [Exit.]

Sir Cha. Depend upon everything—A very troublesome Business this—send me once fairly rid on't—if ever I'm caught in an *Honourable* Affair again!—A Debt now that a little ready Civility, and away, would satisfy, a Man might bear with; but to have a Rent Charge upon one's Good-nature, with an unconscionable long Scroll of Arrears too, that would eat out the Profits of the best Estate in Christendom—ah—intolerable! Well, I'll even to my Lord, and shake off the Thoughts on't.
[Exit.]

Enter Lady Betty and Lady Easy.

L. Bet. I observe, my Dear, you have usually this great Fortune at play, it were enough to make one suspect your good Luck with an Husband.

L. Easy. Truly I don't complain of my Fortune either Way.

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L. Bet. Pr'ythee tell me, you are often advising me to it; are there those real comfortable Advantages in Marriage, that our old Aunts and Grandmothers would persuade us of?

L. Easy. Upon my Word, if I had the worst Husband in the World, I should think so.

L. Bet. Ay, but then the Hazard of having a good One, my Dear

L. Easy. You may have a good one, I dare say, if you don't give Aurs until you spoil him.

L. Bet. Can there be the same dear, full Delight in giving Ease, as Pain? O! my Dear, the Thought of parting with one's Power is insupportable.

L. Easy. And the keeping it, till it dwindles into no Power at all, is most ruefully foolish.

L. Bet. But still to marry before one's heartily in Love——

L. Easy. Is not half so formidable a Calamity—but if I have any Eyes, my Dear, you'll run no great Hazard of that in venturing on my Lord *Morelove*—You don't know, perhaps, that within this half Hour the Tone of your Voice is strangely softened to him, ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. My Dear, you are positively, one or other, the most censorious Creature in the World—and so I see it's in vain to talk with you—Pray, will you go back to the Company?

L. Easy. Ah! Poor Lady Betty! [Exeunt]

The SCENE Changes to Sir Charles's Lodgings

Enter Sir Charles and Lord Morelove.

L. Mor. *Charles!* you have transported me! you have made my part in the Scene so very easy too, 'tis impossible I should fail in it.

Sir Cha. That's what I considered; for now the more you throw yourself into her Power, the more I shall be able to force her into yours.

The Careless Husband

L. Mor. After all (begging the Ladies' Pardon) your fine women, like Bullies, are only stout when they know their Men : a Man of an honest Courage may fright 'em into anything ! Well, I am fully instructed, and will about it instantly—Won't you go along with me ?

Sir Cha. That may not be so proper—besides I have a little Business upon my Hands.

L. Mor. O, your Servant, Sir—Good-by to you—you shan't stir.

Sir Cha. My Lord your Servant—

[Exit *L. Mor*]

So, now to dispose myself 'till 'tis time to think of my Lady *Graveairs*—Umph ! I have no great Maw to that Business, methinks I don't find myself in Humour enough to come up to the Civil Things, that are usually expected in the making up of an old Quarrel.

Edging crosses the Stage.

There goes a warmer Temptation by half—Ha ! into my Wife's Bedchamber too—I question if the Jade has any great Business there—I have a great Fancy she has only a mind to be taking the Opportunity of Nobody's being at Home to make her Peace with me—Let me see—ay, I shall have time enough to go to her Ladyship afterwards—Besides, I want a little Sleep, I find—Your young Fops may talk of their Women of Quality—but to me, now, there's a strange, agreeable Convenience in a Creature one is not obliged to say much to upon these Occasions [Going]

Enter Edging

Edg. Did you call me, Sir ?

Sir Cha. Ha ! All's right—[*Aside*]*—*Yes, Madam, I did call you [*Sits down.*]

Edg. What would you please to have, Sir ?

Sir Cha. Have ! why, I would have you grow into a good Girl, and know when you are well-used, Hussy.

Edg. Sir, I don't complain of anything, not I.

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Sir Cha. Well, don't be uneasy—I am not angry with you now—Come and kiss me.

Edg. Lard, Sir!

Sir Cha. Don't be a Fool—come hither.

Edg. Pshaw—— [*Goes to him.*]

Sir Cha. No wry Face—so—sit down I won't have you look grave, neither, let me see you smile, you Jade you.

Edg. Ha! ha! [*Laughs and blushes*]

Sir Cha. Ah, you melting Rogue!

Edg. Come, don't you be at your Tricks now—Lard! can't you sit still and talk with one! I'm sure there's ten times more Love in that, and fifty times the Satisfaction, People may say what they will.

Sir Cha. Well! now you're good, you shall have your own Way—I am going to lie down in the next Room, and, since you love a little Chat, come and throw my Night-Gown over me, and you shall talk me to sleep. [*Exit.*]

Edg. Yes, Sir—for all his Way, I see he likes me still. [*Exit after him.*]

The SCENE changes to the TERRACE.

Enter Lady Betty, Lady Easy, and Lord Morelove.

L. Mor. Nay, Madam, there you are too severe upon him, for bating now and then a little Vanity, my Lord *Foppington* does not want Wit sometimes to make him a tolerable Woman's Man.

L. Bet. But such Eternal Vanity grows tiresome.

L. Easy. Come, if he were not so loose in his Morals, Vanity, methinks might be easily excused, considering how much 'tis in Fashion: for pray observe, what's half the Conversation of most of the fine young People about Town, but a perpetual Affectation of appearing foremost in the Knowledge of Manners, new Modes, and Scandal? and in that I don't see anybody comes up to him.

The Careless Husband

L. Mor. Nor I, indeed—and here he comes—Pray, Madam, let's have a little more of him; nobody shews him to more advantage than your Ladyship.

L. Bet. Nay, with all my Heart; you'll second me, my Lord?

L. Mor. Upon Occasion, Madam——

L. Easy. Engaging upon Parties, my Lord? [*Aside, and smiling to L. Mor*]

Enter Lord Foppington.

L. Fop. So, Ladies! What's the Affair now?

L. Bet. Why you were, my Lord, I was allowing you a great many good Qualities, but Lady *Easy* says you are a perfect Hypocrite; and that whatever Airs you give yourself to the Women, she's confident you value no Woman in the World equal to your own Lady.

L. Fop. You see, Madam, how I am scandalized upon your Account. But it's so natural for a Prude to be malicious, when a Man endeavours to be well with anybody but herself; did you never observe she was piqued at that before? Ha! ha!

L. Bet. I'll swear you are a provoking Creature

L. Fop. Let's be more familiar upon't, and give her Disorder. Ha! ha!

L. Bet. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Fop. Stap my Breath, but Lady *Easy* is an admirable Discoverer—Marriage is indeed a prodigious Security of one's inclination. a Man's likely to take a World of Pains in an Employment, where he can't be turned out for his Idleness.

L. Bet. I vow, my Lord, that's vastly generous to all the fine Women; you are for giving them a Despotic Power in Love, I see, to reward and punish as they think fit.

L. Fop. Ha! ha! Right, Madam, what signifies Beauty without Power? And a fine Woman, when

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she's married makes as ridiculous a Figure, as a beaten General marching out of a Garrison.

L. Easy. I'm afraid, *Lady Betty*, the greatest Danger in your loss of Power, would be from too heedless a Liberality: you would more mind the Man than his Merit.

L. Fop. Piqued again, by all that's Fretful—Well, certainly to give Envy is a Pleasure inexpressible. [*To Lady Betty*]

L. Bet. Ha! ha!

L. Easy. Does she not shew him well, my Lord?
[*Aside to L. Mor.*]

L. Mor. Perfectly, and me to myself—For now I almost blush to think I ever was uneasy at him. [*To Lady Easy.*]

L. Fop. Ha! ha! *Lady Easy*, I ask ten Thousand Pardons, I'm afraid I am rude, all this while

L. Easy. O not at all, my Lord, you are always good Company when you please: not but in some things, indeed, you are apt to be like other fine Gentlemen, a little too loose in your Principles

L. Fop. O Madam, never to the Offence of the Ladies I agree in any Community with them, nobody is a more constant Churchman, when the fine Women are there

L. Easy. O fy, my Lord, you ought not to go for their Sakes at all And I wonder, you that are for being such a good Husband of your Virtues, are not afraid of bringing your Prudence into a Lampoon or a Play.

L. Bet. Lampoons and Plays, Madam, are only Things to be laughed at.

L. Mor. Plays now indeed one need not be so much afraid of, for since the late short-sighted View of 'em, Vice may go on and prosper, the Stage dares hardly shew a vicious Person speaking like himself, for fear of being called prophane for exposing him

L. Easy. 'Tis hard, indeed, when People won't dis-

The Careless Husband

tinguish between what's meant for Contempt, and what for Example

L. Fop. Od.so ! Ladies, the Court's coming home, I see, shall we not all make our Bows ?

L. Bet O ! by all means.

L. Easy. Lady *Betty*, I must leave you : for I'm obliged to write Letters, and I know you won't give me Time after Supper

L. Bet. Well, my Dear, I'll make a short Visit and be with you [Exit *Lady Easy*.]

Pray what's become of my Lady *Graveairs* ?

L. Mor I believe she's gone home, Madam, she seemed not to be very well.

L. Fop And where's Sir *Charles*, my Lord ?

L. Mor. I left him at his own Lodgings

L. Bet He's upon some Ramble, I'm afraid.

L. Fop Nay, as for that Matter, a Man may ramble at home, sometimes ! But here come the Chaises, we must make a little more haste, Madam [Exeunt]

The SCENE changes to Sir CHARLES'S Lodgings.

Enter Lady Easy and a Servant

L. Easy Is your Master come home ?

Serv Yes, Madam

L. Easy. Where is he ?

Serv. I believe, Madam, he's laid down to sleep.

L. Easy. Where's *Edging* ? Bid her get me some Wax and Paper—stay, it's no matter, now I think on't—there's some above upon my Toilet

[Exeunt severally.]

The SCENE opens and discovers Sir CHARLES without his Perrwig, and EDGING by him, both asleep in two Easy Chairs.

Then enter Lady Easy, who starts and trembles, sometime unable to speak.

L. Easy. Ha !

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Protect me, Virtue ! Patience, Reason !
Teach me to bear this killing Sight, or let
Me think my dreaming Senses are deceived !
For sure a Sight like this, might raise the Arm
Of Duty, even to the Breast of Love ! At least
I'll throw this Vizard of my Patience off
Now wake him in his Guilt,
And bare-faced front him with my Wrongs
I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay till he—
Frowns on me, perhaps—and then
I'm lost again—The Ease of a few Tears
Is all that's left to me—
And Duty too forbids me to insult,
When I have vowed Obedience—Perhaps
The Fault's in me, and Nature has not formed
Me with the Thousand little Requisites
That Warm the Heart to Love—
Somewhere there is a Fault—
But Heaven best knows what both of us deserve

Ha ! Bare-headed, and in so sound a Sleep ! Who
knows, while thus exposed to the unwholesome Air,
but Heav'n, offended, may overtake his Crime, and in
some languishing Distemper, leave him a severe Example
of its violated Laws—Forbid it, Mercy, and forbid it,
Love. This may prevent it

*[Takes her Steinkirk from her Neck,
and lays it gently over his Head]*

And if he should wake offended at my too busy Care,
let my heart-breaking Patience, Duty, and my fond
Affection plead my Pardon *[Exit.]*

*After she has been gone some time, a Bell rings ; at which the
Maid, waking, starts, and stirs Sir Charles.*

Edg. O !

Sir Cha. How now ! what's the Matter ?

Edg. O ! bless my Soul, my Lady's come home.

Sir Cha. Go, go then *[Runs to the Glass. Bell
rings]*

Edg. O lud ! my Head's in such a Condition too.

The Careless Husband

I am coming, Madam—O lud! here's no Powder neither—Here, Madam. [Exit.]

Sir Cha. How now? [Feeling the Steinkirk upon his Head.] What's this? How came it here? Did I not see my Wife wear this To-day?—Death! she can't have been here, sure—It could not be Jealousy that brought her Home—for my coming was accidental—so, too, I fear, might hers—How careless have I been?—Not to secure the Door neither—'Twas foolish—It must be so! She certainly has seen me here sleeping with her Woman—If so, how low an Hypocrite to her must that Sight have proved me?—The Thought has made me despicable even to myself—How mean a Vice is 'Lying? and how often have these empty Pleasures lulled my Honour and my Conscience to a Lethargy—while I grossly have abused her, poorly skulking behind a Thousand Falsehoods? Now I reflect, this has not been the first of her Discoveries—How contemptible a Figure must I have made to her?—A Crowd of recollected Circumstances informs me now, she has been long acquainted with my Follies, and yet with what amazing Prudence has she borne the secret Pangs of injured Love, and wore an everlasting Smile to me? This asks a little Thinking—something should be done—I'll see her instantly, and be resolved from her Behaviour.

[Exit]

The SCENE changes to another Room.

Enter Lady Easy, and Edging.

L Easy Where have you been, *Edging*?

Edg Been, Madam!—I—I—I—I came as soon as I heard you ring, Madam

L Easy Her Guilt confounds her! But she's below my Thought—Fetch my last new Scarf hither—I have a mind to alter it a little—make haste.

Edg. Yes, Madam—I see she does not suspect anything. [Exit.]

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L. Easy. Heigho ! [*Sitting down*] I had forgot—but I am unfit for writing now—'Twas an hard Conflict—yet 'tis a Joy to think it over : a secret Pride, to tell my Heart my Conduct has been just—How low are vicious Minds that offer Injuries, how much superior Innocence that bears 'em—Still there's a Pleasure even in the Melancholy of a quiet Conscience—Away my Tears, it is not yet impossible, for while his Human Nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair.

Re-enter Edging with a Scarf

Edg. Here's the Scarf, Madam.

L. Easy. So, sit down there—and, let me see—here—Rip off all that Silver.

Edg. Indeed, I always thought it would become your Ladyship better without it—But now suppose, Madam, you carried another Row of Gold round the Scallops, and then you take and lay this Silver plain all along the Gathers, and your Ladyship will perfectly see, it will give the Thing ten thousand Times another Air.

L. Easy Pr'ythee don't be impertinent, do as I bid you.

Edg Nay, Madam, with all my Heart, your Ladyship may do as you please.

L. Easy This Creature grows so confident, and I dare not part with her, lest he should think it Jealousy.
[*Aside*]

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Cha So, my Dear ! What, at work ! How are you employed, pray ?

L. Easy. I was thinking to alter this Scarf, here.

Sir Cha. What's amiss ? methinks it's very pretty.

Edg. Yes, Sir, it's pretty enough for that matter, but my Lady has a mind it should be proper too

Sir Cha Indeed !

L. Easy. I fancy plain Gold and Black would become me better.

The Careless Husband

Sir Cha. That's a grave Thought, my Dear.

Edg. O dear Sir, not at all, my Lady's much in the Right. I am sure, as it is, it is fit for nothing but a Girl.

Sir Cha. Leave the Room!

Edg. Sir! I can't stir—I must stay to——

Sir Cha Go—— [*Angrily.*]

Edg. [*Throwing down the Scarf hastily, and crying, aside*]
If ever I speak to him again, I'll be burned.

[*Exit Edging*]

Sir Cha. Sit still, my Dear—I came to talk with you—and which you may well wonder at, what I have to say is of Importance too, but it is in order to my hereafter always talking to you

L. Easy. Your Words were never disobliging, nor can I charge you with a Look that ever had the Appearance of unkind

Sir Cha. The perpetual Spring of your Good-humour, lets me draw no Merit from what I have appeared to be, which makes me curious to know your Thoughts of what I really am, And never having asked you this before it puzzles me, nor can I (that strange Negligence considered) reconcile to Reason your first Thoughts of venturing upon Marriage with me

L. Easy I never thought it such a Hazard.

Sir Cha How could a Woman of your Restraint in Principles, Sedateness, Sense, and tender Disposition, propose to see an happy Life with one (now I reflect) that hardly took an Hour's Pains even before Marriage, to appear but what I am; a loose, unheeding Wretch, absent in all I do Civil, and as often rude without Design, unseasonably thoughtful, easy to a Fault, and in my best of Praise, but carelessly good-natured. How shall I reconcile your Temper with having made so strange a Choice?

L. Easy. Your own Words may answer you—You having never seemed to be, but what you really were;

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and thro' that Carelessness of Temper there still shone forth to me an undesigning Honesty, I always doubted of in smother Faces: Thus, while I saw you took least Pains to win me, you pleased and wooed me most: Nay, I have thought that such a Temper could never be deliberately unkind, or at the worst, I knew that Errors from want of Thinking might be borne; at least, when probably a Moment's serious Thought would end 'em. These were my worst of Fears, and these, when weighed by growing Love against my solid Hopes, were nothing

Sir Cha My Dear, your Understanding startles me, and justly calls my own in Question. I blush to think I've worn so bright a Jewel in my Bosom, and till this Hour, have scarce been curious once to look upon its Lustre.

L. Easy. You set too high a Value on the common Qualities of an easy Wife

Sir Cha Virtues, like Benefits, are double, when concealed. And I confess, I yet suspect you of an higher Value far, than I have spoke you.

L. Easy. I understand you not.

Sir Cha I'll speak more plainly to you—be free and tell me—where did you leave this Handkerchief?

L. Easy. Ha!

Sir Cha. What is't you start at? You hear the Question.

L. Easy What shall I say? my Fears confound me

Sir Cha Be not concerned, my Dear, be easy in the Truth, and tell me.

L. Easy I cannot speak—and I could wish you'd not oblige me to it—'tis the only Thing I ever yet refused you—and tho' I want Reason for my Will, let me not answer you.

Sir Cha. Your Will then be a Reason, and since I see you are so generously tender of reproaching me, 'tis

The Careless Husband

fit I should be easy in my Gratitude, and make what ought to be my Shame, my Joy : let me be therefore pleased to tell you now, your wondrous Conduct has waked me to a Sense of your Disquiet Past, and Resolution never to disturb it more—And (not that I offer it as a Merit, but yet in blind Compliance to my Will) let me beg you would immediately discharge your Woman.

L Easy Alas ! I think not of her—O, my Dear, distract me not with this Excess of Goodness. [*Weeping*]

Sir Cha Nay, praise me not, lest I reflect how little I have deserved it—I see you're in Pain to give me this Confusion—Come, I will not shock your Softness by my untimely Blush for what is past, but rather soothe you to a Pleasure at my Sense of Joy, for my recovered Happiness to come. Give then to my new-born Love what Name you please, it cannot, shall not be too kind O ! it cannot be too soft for what my Soul swells up with Emulation to deserve—Receive me then entire at last, and take what yet no Woman ever truly had, my conquered Heart

L Easy O the soft Treasure ! O the dear Reward of long-desiring Love—Now I am blest indeed to see you kind without the Expense of Pain in being so, to make you mine with Easiness : Thus ! Thus to have you mine, is something more than Happiness, 'tis double Life and Madness of abounding Joy. But 'twas a Pain intolerable to give you a Confusion

Sir Cha O thou engaging Virtue ! But I'm too slow in doing Justice to thy Love . I know thy Softness will refuse me, but remember, I insist upon it—let thy Woman be discharged this Minute.

L Easy. No, my Dear, think me not so low in Faith to fear that after what you've said, 'twill ever be in her Power to do me future Injury . When I can conveniently provide for her, I'll think on't But to discharge her now, might let her guess at the Occasion,

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and methinks I would have all our Differences, like our Endearments, be equally a Secret to our Servants.

Sir Cha. Still my Superior every way—be it as you have better thought—Well, my Dear, now I'll confess a Thing that was not in your Power to accuse me of, to be short, I own this Creature is not the only one I have been to blame with.

L. Easy I know she is not, and was always less concerned to find it so, for Constancy in Errors might have been fatal to me.

Sir Cha. What is't you know, my Dear ? [*Surprised*]

L. Easy Come, I am not afraid to accuse you now—my Lady *Graveairs*—Your Carelessness, my Dear, let all the world know it, and it would have been hard indeed, had it been only to me a Secret.

Sir Cha My Dear, I'll ask no more Questions, for fear of being more ridiculous. I do confess I thought my Discretion had been a Master-piece—I how contemptible must I have looked all this while

L. Easy. You shan't say so

Sir Cha. Well to let you see I had some Shame, as well as Nature in me, I had writ this to my Lady *Graveairs*, upon my first discovery that you knew I had wronged you Read it.

L. Easy [*Reads*] “Something has happened, that prevents the Visit I intended you, and I could gladly wish you never would reproach me if I tell you, 'tis utterly inconvenient that I should ever see you more.”

This indeed was more than I had merited

Enter Servant

Sir Cha. Who's there ? Here—step with this to my Lady *Graveairs* [*Seals the Letter, and gives it to the Servant*]

Serv Yes, Sir—Madam, my Lady *Betty's* come.

L. Easy. I'll wait on her

Sir Cha. My Dear, I'm thinking there may be other

The Careless Husband

things my Negligence may have wronged you in; but be assured, as I discover 'em, all shall be corrected: Is there any Part or Circumstance in your Fortune that I can change or yet make easier to you?

L. Easy None, my Dear, your Good-nature never stinted me in that; and now, methinks, I have less Occasion there than ever.

[*Re-enter Servant*]

Serv. Sir, my Lord *Morelove's* come.

Sir Cha I am coming—I think I told you of the Design we had laid against Lady *Betty*.

L. Easy. You did, and I should be pleased to be myself concerned in it

Sir Cha I believe we may employ you I know he waits for me with Impatience. But, my Dear, won't you think me tasteless to the Joy you've given me, to suffer at this Time any Concern but you t'employ my thoughts?

L. Easy Seasons must be obeyed, and since I know your Friend's Happiness depending, I could not taste my own, should you neglect it.

Sir Cha Thou easy Sweetness—O! what a Waste on thy neglected Love, has my unthinking Brain committed? But Time and future Thrift of Tenderness shall yet repair it all. The Hours will come when this soft gliding Stream that swells my Heart, uninterrupted shall renew its Course——

And like the Ocean after Ebb, shall move
With constant Force of due returning Love

[*Exeunt*]

The SCENE changes to another Room.

And then re-enter Lady Easy and Lady Betty.

L. Bet. You've been in Tears, my Dear, and yet you look pleased too.

L. Easy. You'll pardon me if I don't let you into

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Circumstances. But be satisfied, Sir *Charles* has made me happy, even to a Pain of Joy

L. Bet. Indeed I'm truly glad of it, tho' I am sorry to find that any one who has Generosity enough to do you Justice, should unprovoked be so great an Enemy to me.

L. Easy Sir *Charles* your Enemy ?

L. Bet. My Dear, you'll pardon me if I always thought him so, but now I am convinced of it

L. Easy. In what, pray ? I can't think you'll find him so

L. Bet. O ! Madam, it has been his whole Business of late to make 'an utter Breach between my Lord *Morelove* and me.

L. Easy. That may be owing to your Usage of my Lord. Perhaps he thought it would not disoblige you ; I am confident you are mistaken in him.

L. Bet O ! I don't use to be out in Things of this Nature, I can see well enough : But I shall be able to tell you more when I have talked with my Lord, ha ! ha ! ha !

L. Easy Here he comes, and because you shall talk with him—No Excuses—for positively I will leave you together

L. Bet Indeed my Dear, I desire you would stay then, for I know you think now that I have a mind to—to——

L. Easy To—to—ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Going*]

L. Bet. Well ! remember this

Enter Lord Morelove

L. Mor I hope I don't fright you away, Madam ?

L. Easy. Not at all, my Lord, but I must beg your Pardon, for a Moment, I'll wait upon you immediately
[*Exit.*]

L. Bet. My Lady *Easy* gone ?

L. Mor. Perhaps, Madam, in Friendship to you ; she

The Careless Husband

thinks I may have deserved the Coldness you of late have shewn me; and was willing to give you this Opportunity to convince me, you have not done it without just Grounds and Reason.

L. Bet How handsomely does he reproach me ! But I can't bear that he should think I know it.—[*Aside*]—My Lord, whatever has passed between you and me, I dare swear that could not be her Thoughts at this Time : For when two People have appeared professed Enemies, she can't but think one will as little care to give, as t'other to receive, a Justification of their Actions.

L. Mor Passion indeed often does repeated Injuries on both Sides, but I don't remember in my Heat of Error, I ever yet professed myself your Enemy

L. Bet. My Lord, I shall be very free with you—I confess I do think now I have not a greater Enemy in the World.

L. Mor If having long loved you, to my own Disquiet, be injurious, I am contented then to stand the foremost of your Enemies

L. Bet. O my Lord, there's no great Fear of your being my Enemy that way, I dare say——

L. Mor There's no other Way my Heart can bear to offend you now, and I foresee in that it will persist to my undoing

L. Bet Fy, fy, my Lord, we know where your Heart is well enough.

L. Mor My Conduct has indeed deserved this Scorn, and therefore 'tis but just I should submit to your Resentment, and beg (tho' I'm assured in vain) for Pardon [*Kneels.*]

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Cha How, my Lord ! [*L. Mor rises*]

L. Bet Ha ! He here ? This was unlucky [*Aside*]

L. Mor O pity my Confusion ! [*To L. Betty.*]

Sir Cha. I am sorry to see you can so soon forget

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yourself : methinks the Insult you have borne from that Lady, by this Time should have warned you into a disgust of her regardless Principles.

L. Mor Hold, *Sir Charles* ! While you and I are Friends, I desire you would speak with Honour of this Lady—'Tis sufficient I have no Complaint against her, and——

L. Bet. My Lord, I beg you would resent this thing no further : An Injury like this is better punished with our Contempt ; apparent Malice should only be laughed at

Sir Cha. Ha ! ha ! the old Recourse. Offers of any Hopes to delude him from his Resentment · and then, as the *Grand Monarch* did with *Cavalier*, you are sure to keep your word with him

L. Bet *Sir Charles*, to let you know how far I am above your little Spleen, my Lord, your Hand from this Hour——

Sir Cha. Pshah ! Pshah ! All Design ! all Pique ! mere Artifice and disappointed Woman——

L. Bet. Look you, *Sir*, not that I doubt my Lord's Opinion of me, yet——

Sir Cha Look you, *Madam*, in short, your Word has been too often taken to let you make up Quarrels, as you used to do, with a soft Look and a fair Promise you never intended to keep

L. Bet Was ever such an Insolence ? he won't give me leave to speak

L. Mor. *Sir Charles* !

L. Bet No pray, my Lord, have Patience, and since his Malice seems to grow particular, I dare his worst, and urge him to the Proof on't Pray, *Sir*, wherein do you charge me with Breach of Promise to my Lord ?

Sir Cha. Death, you won't deny it ? How often to piece up a Quarrel, have you appointed him to visit you alone, and tho' you have promised to see no other Company the whole Day, when he was come, he has

The Careless Husband

found you among the Laugh of noisy Fops, Coquets, and Coxcombs, dissolutely gay, while your full Eyes ran o'er with Transport of their Flattery, and your own vain Power of pleasing? How often, I say, have you been known to throw away, at least, four Hours of your Good-humour, upon such Wretches, and the Minute they were gone, grew only dull to him, sunk into a distasteful Spleen, complained you had talked yourself into the Headache, and then indulged upon the dear Delight of seeing him in Pain: and by that Time you stretched and gaped him heartily out of Patience, of a sudden most impatiently remember you had outsat your Appointment with my Lady *Fiddle-Faddle*, and immediately order your Coach to the Park?

L. Bet. Yet, Sir, have you done?

Sir Cha. No—tho' this might serve to shew the Nature of your Principles. But the noble Conquest you have gained at last over defeated Sense of Reputation, has made your Fame immortal

L. Mor. How, Sir?

L. Bet. My Reputation?

Sir Cha. Ay, Madam, your Reputation—My Lord, if I advance a Falsehood, then resent it—I say, your Reputation—'t has been your Life's whole Pride of late, to be the common Toast of every public Table, vain even in the infamous Addresses of a married Man, my Lord *Foppington*, let that be reconciled with Reputation, I'll now shake hands with Shame, and bow me to the low Contempt which you deserve from him, not but I suppose you'll yet endeavour to recover him. Now you find ill Usage in Danger of losing your Conquest, 'tis possible you'll stop at nothing to preserve it.

L. Bet. Sir Charles!——

[*Walks disordered, and he after her.*]

Sir Cha. I know your Vanity is so voracious, 'twill even wound itself to feed itself, offer him a Blank,

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perhaps to fill up with Hopes of what Nature he pleases,
and part with even your Pride to keep him.

L. Bet Sir Charles, I have not deserved this of you.
[*Bursting into Tears*]

Sir Cha. Ah! True Woman,—drop him a soft dis-
sembling Tear, and then his just Resentment must be
hushed of Course

L. Mor. O Charles! I can bear no more, those
Tears are too reproaching.

Sir Cha. Hist for your Life! [*Aside, and then aloud*]
—My Lord, if you believe her, you're undone, the very
next sight of my Lord *Foppington* would make her yet
forswear all that she can promise.

L. Bet My Lord *Foppington*! Is that the mighty
Crime that must condemn me then? You know I used
him but as a Tool of my Resentment, which you yourself,
by a pretended Friendship to us both, most artfully
provoked me to——

L. Mor Hold, I conjure you, Madam, I want not
this Conviction

L. Bet Better send for him this Minute, and you
and he shall both be Witnesses of the Contempt and
Detestation I have for any froward Hopes his Vanity
may have given him, or your Malice insinuate

Sir Cha Death! you would as soon eat Fire, as
soon part with your luxurious Taste of Folly, as dare to
own the half of this before his Face, or any one, that
would make you blush to deny it to—Here comes my
Wife, now we shall see—Ha! and my Lord *Foppington*
with her—Now! now we shall see this mighty Proof
of your Sincerity—Now! my Lord, you'll have a
Warning sure, and henceforth know me for your Friend
indeed

Enter Lady Easy and Lord Foppington

L. Easy In Tears, my Dear, what's the Matter?

L. Bet. O, my Dear, all I told you's true Sir Charles

The Careless Husband

has shewn himself so inveterately my Enemy, that if I believed I deserved but half his Hate, 'twould make me hate myself

L. Fop. Hark you, *Charles*, pr'ythee what is this Business?

Sir Cha. Why your's, my Lord, for ought I know—I have made such a Breach betwixt 'em—I can't promise much for the Courage of a Woman; but if hers holds, I'm sure it's wide enough, you may enter ten a Breast, my Lord

L. Fop. Say'st thou so, *Charles*? Then I hold six to Four I am the first Man in the Town

L. Easy Sure there must be some Mistake in this. I hope he has not made my Lord your Enemy?

L. Bet I know not what he has done.

L. Mor Far be that Thought! Alas, I am too much in Fear myself, that what I have this Day committed, advised by his mistaken Friendship, may have done my Love irreparable Prejudice

L. Bet No, my Lord, since I perceive his little Arts have not prevailed upon your Good-nature, to my Prejudice, I am bound in Gratitude, in Duty to myself, and to the Confession you have made, my Lord, to acknowledge now, I have been to blame.

L. Mor. Ha! is't possible, can you own so much? O my transported Heart!

L. Bet He says I have taken Pleasure in seeing you uneasy—I own it—but 'twas when that Uneasiness I thought proceeded from your Love, and if you did love—'twill not be too much to pardon it

L. Mor. O let my Soul thus bending to your Power, adore this soft descending Goodness.

L. Bet And since the giddy Woman's Sights I have shewn you too often, have been public, 'tis fit at last the Amends and Reparation should be so. Therefore, what I offered to *Sir Charles*, I now repeat before this Company, my utter Detestation of any past or future

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Gallantry, that has or shall be offered by me to your Uneasiness.

L. Mor O be less generous, or teach me to deserve it—Now blush, Sir *Charles*, at your injurious Accusation.

L. Fop. Hah! *Pardi voilà quelque Chose d'Extraordinaire* [*Aside.*]

L. Bet As for my Lord *Foppington*, I owe him Thanks for having been so friendly an Instrument of our Reconciliation, for though in the little outward Gallantry I received from him, I did not immediately trust him with my Design in it, yet I have a better Opinion of his Understanding, than to suppose he could mistake it.

L. Fop. I am struck dumb with the Deliberation of her Assurance, and do not positively remember, that the *Non-Chalance* of my Temper ever had so bright an Occasion to show itself before.

L. Bet. My Lord, I hope you'll pardon the Freedom I have taken with you

L. Fop. O Madam, don't be under the Confusion of an Apology upon my Account, for in Cases of this Nature, I am never disappointed, but when I find a Lady of the same Mind two Hours together—Madam, I have lost a Thousand Fine Women in my time, but never had the ill Manners to be out of Humour with any one for refusing me, since I was born.

L. Bet. My Lord, that's a very prudent Temper.

L. Fop Madam, to convince you that I am in a universal Peace with Mankind, since you own I have so far contributed to your Happiness, give me leave to have the Honour of completing it, by joining your Hand where you have already offered up your Inclination.

L. Bet. My Lord, that's a Favour I can't refuse you

L. Mor. Generous indeed, my Lord. [*Lord Foppington joins their Hands*]

L. Fop. And stap my Breath, if ever I was better pleased since my first Entrance into human Nature

The Careless Husband

Sir Cha. How now, my Lord! what! throw up the Cards before you have lost the Game?

L. Fop. Look you, *Charles*, 'tis true I did design to have played with her alone. But he that will keep well with the Ladies, must sometimes be content to make one at a Poole with 'em: And since I know I must engage her in my Turn, I don't see any great Odds in letting him take the first Game with her

Sir Cha Wisely considered, my Lord.

L. Bet. And now, *Sir Charles*—

Sir Cha. And now, Madam, I'll save you the Trouble of a long Speech, and in one Word confess that everything I have done in Regard to you this Day was purely artificial—I saw there was no way to secure you to my Lord *Morelove*, but by alarming your Pride with the Danger of losing him. And since the Success must have by this Time convinced you, that in Love nothing is more ridiculous than an over-acted aversion. I am sure you won't take it ill, if we at last congratulate your Good-nature, by heartily laughing at the Fright we had put you in. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Easy Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet Why—well, I declare it now, I hate you worse than ever

Sir Cha Ha! ha! ha! And was it afraid they would take away its Love from it—Poor Lady *Betty*! ha! ha!

L. Easy My Dear, I beg your Pardon, but 'tis impossible not to laugh when one's so heartily pleased.

L. Fop. Really, Madam, I am afraid the Humour of the Company will draw me into your Displeasure too, but if I were to expire this Moment, my last Breath would positively go out with a Laugh. Ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. Nay, I have deserved it all, that's the Truth on't—but I hope, my Lord, you were not in the Design against me.

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L. Mor. As a proof, Madam, I am inclined never to deceive you more—I do confess I had my share in't.

L. Bet. You do, my Lord—then I declare 'twas a Design, one or other—the best carried on that ever I knew in my Life; and (to my Shame I own it) for ought I know, the only Thing that could have prevailed upon my Temper. 'Twas a foolish Pride that has cost me many a bitten Lip to support it—I wish we don't both repent, my Lord

L. Mor. Don't you repent without me, and we never shall.

Sir Cha. Well, Madam, now the worst that the World can say of your past Conduct, is, that my Lord had Constancy, and you have try'd it

Enter a Servant to Lord Morelove

Serv. My Lord, Mr. *Le Fevre's* below and desires to know what time your Lordship will please to have the Music begin.

L. Mor. Sir *Charles*, what say you? will you give me leave to bring 'em hither?

Sir Cha. As the Ladies think fit, my Lord.

L. Bet. O! by all means, 'twill be best here, unless we could have the Terrace to ourselves

L. Mor. Then pray desire 'em to come hither, immediately.

Serv. Yes, my Lord.

[*Exit Servant*]

Enter Lady Graveairs.

Sir Cha. Lady *Graveairs*!

L. Grav. Yes! you may well start! but don't suppose I am now come like a poor Tame-Fool to upbraid your Guilt. but if I could to blast you with a Look.

Sir Cha. Come, come, you have Sense—don't expose yourself—you are unhappy, and I own myself the Cause—the only Satisfaction I can offer you, is to protest no new Engagement takes me from you; but, a sincere

The Careless Husband

Reflection of the long Neglect and Injuries I've done
the best of Wives; for whose Amends, and only Sake,
I must now part with you, and all the inconvenient
Pleasures of my Life.

L. Grav. Have you then fallen into the low Contempt
of exposing me, and to your Wife too?

Sir Cha 'Twas impossible without it, I could ever be
sincere in my Conversation

L. Grav. Despicable!

Sir Cha Do not think so—for my Sake I know
she'll not reproach you—nor by her Carriage, ever let
the World perceive you've wronged her—My Dear——

L. Easy Lady *Graveairs*, I hope you'll sup with us?

L. Grav. I can't refuse so much good Company,
Madam.

Sir Cha You see the worst of her Resentment—in
the meantime, don't endeavour to be her Friend, and
she'll never be your Enemy.

L. Grav. I am unfortunate—'tis what my Folly has
deserved, and I submit to it

L. Mor So! here's the Music!

L. Easy. Come, Ladies, shall we sit?

AFTER the MUSIC, a SONG

SABINA with an Angel's Face
By Love ordain'd for Joy,
Seems of the Sirens' cruel Race
To charm, and then destroy.

With all the Arts of Look and Dress
She fans the fatal Fire.
Through Pride, mistaken oft for Grace,
She bids the Swains expire

The God of Love enraged to see
The Nymph defy his Flame,
Pronounced his merciless Decree
Against the Haughty Dame.

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“ Let Age with double Speed o’ertake her,
Let Love the Room of Pride supply,
And when the Lovers all forsake her,
A spotless Virgin let her die.”

Sir Charles comes forward with Lady Easy.

Sir Cha. Now, my Dear, I find my Happiness grow fast upon me, in all my past Experience of the Sex, I found ever among the better Sort so much of Folly, Pride, Malice, Passion, and irresolute Desire, that I concluded thee but of the foremost Rank, and therefore scarce worth my Concern; but thou hast stirred me with so severe a Proof of thy exalted Virtue, it gives me Wonder equal to my Love—If then the unkindly Thought of what I have been, hereafter should intrude upon thy growing Quiet, let this Reflection teach thee to be easy.

*Thy Wrongs when Greatest, most thy Virtue proved
And from that Virtue found, I blushed and truly loved*

[*Exeunt.*]

FINIS

APPENDIX F

EXTRACTED from Fielding's pamphlet, *THE TRYAL OF COLLEY CIBBER, Comedian, etc.*; for writing a book entitled *AN APOLOGY FOR HIS LIFE*, etc.¹

Lo ! He hath written a book !

INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the Opinion of Cicero . That he who commits his Thoughts to Paper without being able methodically to range them, or properly to illustrate them, gives us an instance of the most intemperate Abuse of his own Time, of Letters themselves, and tho' Quintilian hath asserted that Grammar is the Foundation of all Science, nay, Horace himself denies any Thing to be in the Power of Genius without Improvement, notwithstanding these Authorities, I have very often suspected whether Learning be of such Consequence to a Writer as is imagined This however I have hitherto kept to myself, and, perhaps, tho' Horace hath in another place taken up the contrary Side to what he declares above, and hath enumerated many Advantages arising to a State from the Custom of Writing as well without as with Learning, I might perhaps have never ventured publicly to have declared my Opinion, had I not found it supported by one of the *Greatest Writers* of our own Age . I mean MR COLLEY

¹ The pamphlet was printed for the author, and sold by—amongst others—the notorious E Curll, bookseller of Rose Street, Covent Garden, who so often figures in Pope's *Dunciad*

Appendix F

CIBBER, who, in the Apology for his Life, tells us, *That we have frequently Great Writers that cannot read.*

But as by not reading, our Author explains himself not to mean such as do not know their great A, but those who cannot read theatrically. so by not reading I mean such as we generally say *can hardly write or read*, or in other Words, a Man qualified to be a member of the R(oyal) S(ociety).

Our Author, who is a GREAT WRITER every inch of him, hath, as well as Longinus, given us an Example of what he asserts, for I am apprehensive that some Persons who know him only by his Book, may really doubt whether he can read or no. As this may possibly be a controverted Point, I wish when he had told us he had gone through a School, he had also told us what Books they read in the upper Form, since there are, I believe, some Schools where the Forms are numbered by the Numbers of Syllables, which make one Word more difficult to spell than another. However, tho' his History nowhere expressly declares his *ne plus ultra* in Learning, there is a Passage in it which, tho' it may be overlook'd by an ordinary Reader, brings this Point within a very narrow Compass of Certainty, *Wherever THE VERB OUTDO comes in* (says our Author) *the PLEASANT ACCUSATIVE CASE OUTDOING is sure to follow*¹ Now as I have shewn in a former Paper that his Learning could have gone very little beyond the Accidence, I think it is plain from this Instance, that he must have learned as far as the *pleasant Accusative Case*, and not quite so far as the *Participle* A Part of Speech which, if he had known, would certainly have made its Appearance here.

After so many Commendations of this Work,

¹ A reference to Cibber's absurd criticism of Mrs Oldfield's performance as Lady Townly, in which he said *she outdid her usual Outdoings*. In later editions of his Preface to *The Provoked Husband* (in the first edition of which the expression occurred) this was altered to *She here outdid her usual excellence*

Trial of Colley Cibber

the Author will permit me to find a few Faults. The Pages 217 and 218 are almost entirely taken up to inform the Reader that the Biographer lent Colonel Brett his clean shirt. This brings to my mind a Story in Dr. South's Letter to Sherlock, which is in Substance as follows. "Once on a Time a Gentleman and his Servant were travelling together, and the Gentleman called out to his Man, and said to him, John, get thee down from thy Horse and I will get me down from my Horse: Then take off the Saddle that is on thy Horse, and afterwards take off the saddle that is on my Horse, then take thou the Saddle that was on my Horse, and put on thy Horse, and the Saddle that was on thy Horse, put thou on my Horse. Lord, Sir, says John, could you not have said Change Saddles?" So might our Biographer have said, Change Shirts.

THE TRIAL OF COLLEY CIBBER.

Theophilus Pistole, *alias C—r*,¹ was called to the Bar, but the Gaoler answered that he had been that morning taken out of his Custody by the officer of another County, the said Pistole being at this Time in almost every Court of the Kingdom.

Colley Apology, *alias C—b—r*, was then set to the Bar.
"Colley, hold up your hand."

Sometime was spent before the Prisoner could be brought to know which Hand he was to hold up

"You stand indicted by the name of *Colley Apology*, late of *Covent Garden*, Esq; for that you, not having the Fear of Grammar before your Eyes, on the first of *April*, at a certain place called the *Bath* in the County of *Somerset*, in *Knightsbridge* in the County of *Middlesex*, in and upon the *English* language an Assault did make, and then and there, with a certain weapon called a *Goose-quill*, value one Farthing, which you in your left

¹ Cibber's son, whose most famous rôle was *Ancient Pistol*.

Appendix F

Hand then held, several very broad Wounds, but of no Depth at all, on the said *English* language did make, and so you the said *Colley Apology* the said *English* language did murder " To which the Prisoner pleaded *Not guilty*.

Several Exceptions were taken to the Indictment, as that the Wounds were not described, and the English Language was not said to have died, etc : But they were all over-ruled.

Anne Apple-Pie sworn The Prisoner is my Master I have often seen him with a Goose-quill in his Hand, and a Bottle full of Liquor before him, into which he dipped the Weapon and then made several Scratches on white Paper, but with what Design I can't tell He would often ask me how I spelt several Words, upon which I told him I had never been at School, and he answered he had been at School but had almost forgot what he learned there

Prisoner Have you not often seen me look in a Book?

Anne Apple-Pie. Yes, Sir

Court What Book?

Anne Apple-Pie I can't read myself, but my Master used to call it *Bailey's Dicksnary*.

At which there was a great Laugh

Thomas Trot sworn An't please your Honour, my Lord, I lived with the Prisoner several years. About four Years ago, my Master, the Prisoner, and I were riding together towards the *Bath* *Tom*, says my Master, for so he used to call me, what dost think? Sir, says I, I can't tell Why, says he, I am going to write my Life; Dost think 'twill sell? Aye, to be sure, Sir, says I. for I had heard my Fellow-Servants say, my Master was a great Writer and *Poet Horreat*, which they said was the Top Poet in the Kingdom And so, an' please your Honour, my Lord, as we jogged on, my Master passing by a River, called to me, *Tom*, says he, dost thou see the *exquisite sweet Flowings* of the Water? So sweetly will my Life flow. Those were his very Words,

Trial of Colley Cibber

but I little thought he meant any Harm, tho' I did not understand him. And so my Lord, we came to an Inn, and I observed the Prisoner reading something which was written upon the Window, and crying out, That will do, an excellent Thing for my Book, stap my Vitals !

Prisoner. Did I not write something down in my Pocket-Book at the same Time ?

Thomas Trot. You did so.

Prisoner. You see, Sir, what Book was meant. It was my usual Custom to collect these scattered Pieces of Wit, which by repeating in Company, I often gave a sparkling Turn to the delicate Adroitness of Conversation, and sometimes by writing the same on other windows ¹ I have transconveyed the fiery Rays of a lucid Understanding from one Town to another.

Thomas Trot. I know no more of the Matter, but that I heard among the Neighbours the other Day, that my Master made a terrible Business on't, and that he would be devilishly worked for it in the Champion.²

Then J Watts, M. Lewis, and some others, were sworn and brought the fact home on the Prisoner, after which three Numbers of the Champion were read, and the several Quotations compared with the Original

Court. Well, Mr. C—b—r, what have you to say for yourself ?

Prisoner. Sir, I am as innocent as the Child which hath not yet entered into Human Nature, of the Fact laid to my Charge. This Accusation is the forward Spring of Envy of my Lawrel. It is impossible I should have any Enmity to the *English* Language, with which I am so little acquainted. if therefore I have struck any Wounds into it, they have rolled from Accident only. . . .

The Prisoner then called several Persons to his own and his Book's Character. As to his own, they all gave

¹ With his diamond ring

² Another of Fielding's publications, in which he was wont to lash Cibber.

Appendix F

him a very good one, and particularly a very fat Gentleman who often told the Court that he was *a pleasant companion* . . .

The Captain¹ then summed up the Evidence, and just before he concluded, *Mrs. Joan* whispered in his ear, that the *Apology* was ordered by the Author to be twice advertised in the *Champion*,* upon which the Captain, not from the Motive of a Bribe, but of the Prisoner's Submission to his Correction, and likewise considering that he had stood already three times in the *Censorial Pillory*, and being well pelted, directed the Jury in his Favour, and they found it CHANCE-MEDLEY.

¹ Captain Hercules Vinegar (*i e* Fielding), Great Champion and Censor of Great Britain

* But a pitiful six-shilling Corruption, which is the Price of Two Advertisements.

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